CLASSICAL DIASPORA

Irish Migrations and Classical Antiquity

Edited by Isabelle Torrance
with a foreword by Mary McAleese

BLOOMSBURY

IRISH MIGRATIONS AND CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

CLASSICAL DIASPORA

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Edited by Isabelle Torrance

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Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, 1359 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA
Bloomsbury Publishing Ireland, 29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 AY28, Ireland

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First published in Great Britain 2026

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Torrance, Isabelle C. editor
Title: Irish migrations and classical antiquity / edited by Isabelle Torrance.
Description: London ; New York : Bloomsbury Academic, 2026. | Series: Classical diaspora | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2025022607 | ISBN 9781350430426 hardback | ISBN 9781350430464 paperback | ISBN 9781350430433 pdf | ISBN 9781350430440 epub
Subjects: LCSH: English literature—Irish authors—Classical influences | English literature—Irish authors—History and criticism Irish—Intellectual life | National characteristics, Irish, in literature | Irish diaspora | LCGFT: Literary criticism | Essays
Classification: LCC PR8719 .I76 2026
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025022607

ISBN: HB: 978-1-3504-3042-6
ePDF: 978-1-3504-3043-3
eBook: 978-1-3504-3044-0

Series: Classical Diaspora

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

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FOREWORD BY MARY MCALEESE, PRESIDENT OF IRELAND (1997–2011), CHANCELLOR OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Looking back from Brexit to medieval Ireland: the place of religion in Irish migrations and classical antiquity

We travel the roads back to medieval times at our peril, for they are not motorways with clear signage and knowable destinations but meandering trails frustrated by faded footprints or false trails. We know that history happened. We are just not always sure precisely what happened, or why or how or when. Nor can we be sure when it is over, for there can be a very long shelf-life for narratives, ideas, half-truths, falsehoods, heroes and villains, memories and musings. Looking back to classical antiquity to describe what happened is a bit like having a one-billion-piece, three-dimensional, jigsaw puzzle with many pieces missing, in the wrong place or blank. Scholarship – penetrating, patient, passionate, yet thorough – is key to moving us from perplexing puzzle to credible picture. That is why there is a real sense of wonder and excitement at this story of Irish migrations and classical antiquity. It helps to introduce the Irish more fully to their history and heritage, to what was given and what was absorbed from others, both in Ireland and abroad, while also highlighting for the peoples of Britain and Continental Europe, and even Scandinavia, how layers of their history were coloured by the impact of Irish men and women over the centuries.

The Classical Diaspora series, published by Bloomsbury, in which this book appears, 'addresses issues of national and ethnic identity within classical studies, reflecting the classical world's complex and diverse legacy in fields such as education, government, technology, literature, painting, cinema, philosophy and empire building'.

Ireland has a strong claim to a celebrated legacy in the fields of classical education, literature and philosophy, but the Irish diaspora were arguably first and foremost profoundly implicated in the spread of *religion* and this is inseparable from the intersection of classical antiquity and Irish migration history. The early Irish diaspora were classically-educated *peregrini* (cf. O'Rorke, Chapter 2, this volume), not in the Roman sense of Roman subjects who lacked citizenship but rather 'travellers for Christ', itinerant evangelizers, who travelled far and wide in Ireland and Europe, not always with a clear map of where they were going, but with a clear mission to preach the Christian gospel to those who had not heard it before, to those who had fallen away from

Christianity, or to those who had, worse still, turned it into toxic politics. They were unapologetically God-centred and God-missioned.

Ireland's famous title, '*Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum*' (Island of Saints and Scholars) has probably had too long a shelf-life. Certainly, recent events in Ireland, related to the Catholic Church, have added two more contemporary words to that ancient description: Island of Saints, Scholars, Secrets and Scandals. However, even in these more cynical times, where massified education has equipped us with the formidable interrogative skills and scholarship to examine forensically the accidental or deliberate riddles, engimas and mysteries of history, we can be impressed still, inspired still, by the greatness of spirit, the courage and the transcendent legacy left to us by those *peregrini*. In some cases that legacy has operated like the 'starter' live fermented culture we use to make sourdough bread, which all of us became experts in producing during the Covid-19 lockdown. The *peregrini*'s legacy has something of the quality of living organisms long after they are dead. Just as the chemical process of fermentation adds new textures, flavours, absorption and reproduction qualities to our food, so too there has been a fermentation process, as elusive as it is real, that those early Irish migrants can lay claim to. They are still morphing so elusively that scholars can often chase their tails, for they are still living history at work in our cultures, identities, politics, perspectives, lives, Gods, religions, confessing, spirituality, poetry, messaging, archiving, forgetting, remembering, hating, adoring, avenging, reconciling. That this should be so is in many ways astonishing, for the Christian faith they carried with them to mainland Europe had first been brought to the Irish by *peregrini* from the same mainland Europe where it had the political wind of the powerful Roman Empire at its back. How quickly things had changed, become chaotic. And into that foment came the extraordinary ferment that was the Irish *peregrini*, with their Irish monasticism, and Christian culture, a ferment so significant that historian Thomas Cahill was able to say (1995: 4), 'Without the mission of the Irish monks, who single-handedly refounded European civilization throughout the continent, . . . the world that came after them would have been an entirely different one.'[1]

The Irish Christian culture these monks brought with them was far from peripheral or insular. As Crawford Gribben has recently observed of the monastic institutions which became so distinctive a feature of the medieval Irish Church, largely thanks to Saint Patrick (2021: 55–6):

> Monasteries became the laboratories in which an Irish Christian culture was developed and from which it was disseminated. These institutions brought together influences from multiple European cultures to fashion a distinctive aesthetic, literary and liturgical style. This hybrid style was exported back into Europe as Irish monks led the cross-cultural evangelism through which their church made an extraordinary and increasingly controversial impact across what was left of the Roman world.

That impact was as much political as it was spiritual for, if as Gribben suggests (2021: 56), it was Patrick's seventh-century biographer Muirchú who was 'the first to think of the

Irish as a nation', it was the sixth-century missionary Columbanus (543–615), the most celebrated of the Irish medieval diaspora, who was the first to think of Europe as a collaborative union of distinct nations: two ideas with consequences that are real, and still being realized, in our time.

I confess to having been bold enough to suggest in two documentaries I presented in recent years on the life, legacy and continuing influence of Saint Columbanus that he was 'The First European' and 'the Man who saved Europe', in fact the inspiration for what we today call the European Union.[2] Robert Schumann, who, along with Jean Monet, Alcide De Gaspari and Konrad Adenauer, was one of the deep thinkers behind that historic Union, the best and noblest idea that Europe, or indeed the world, has had in millennia, described Columbanus as having 'willed and achieved a spiritual union between the principal European countries of his time', calling him 'the patron saint of all those who now seek to build a united Europe'. These sentiments were uttered in July 1950, at a congress organized in Luxeuil, France, to celebrate the 1,400th anniversary of the birth of St Columbanus. It was the brainchild of Schuman, who used the event to hold secret talks with European leaders about the idea which would become the European Union.

However, I do not indulge solely in what some may dismiss as fanciful connections between the medieval era and our contemporary world. Rather, I join the curious and encourage them in their search within the complexity of those far-off times and what is retrievable about them – what is true, what is likely and what science and scholarship renders reachable well beyond and beneath hagiography or romantic myth. Always bearing in mind that there is an elusive arena of the human heart where stories linger, often hidden over centuries, and yet transmitted quietly, even secretly, from heart to heart and home to home, so that what is in the textbooks is not always what may be in *béal an phobail* (the mouth of the people). What seems to be agreed is that, to quote Flechner and Meeder (2016: 1):

> Since early modern times, European scholars have emphasized the involvement of Irish holy émigrés in continental religious history between the sixth and eighth centuries as they travelled the mainland to preach their religion of the book. Irishmen were shown to have founded monasteries, bringing with them their native viewpoints and traditions and making a significant impact on western Europe's monastic landscape.

As Schuman's reference to the continuing influence of Columbanus fourteen hundred years after his death points up, however, is that the impact of Ireland's medieval diaspora cannot simply be corralled into religious space, for wherever the Irish are, politics and religion are sure to be entwined, and that was certainly true of Columbanus. It is remarkable that his phrase '*totius Europae*' (the whole of Europe), uttered fifteen hundred years ago, should have inspired a radical new vision for Europe, whispered quietly at the 1950 conference of world leaders in Luxeuil. Two world wars had drenched Europe in the blood and tears of its people, had unleashed unequalled evil, and had drained away faith in the decency of humanity, until from the ashes there emerged the memory of the vision for a

Europe of the nations, a vision first articulated by the medieval Irish monk Columbanus. Those medieval embers fanned to the flame of a diachronic continuum, a polyphonic phenomenon for our time. That flame brought hope. It still does. The monk who set sail from Bangor in what is now Northern Ireland, that part of a partitioned, colonized Ireland which today remains under British rule, would no doubt be quick to make appointments with the leaders of our day, as he did in his day, to preach his gospel of the many benefits of respectful partnership, good neighbourliness, friendship, parity, esteem and intelligent collaboration that need not sacrifice but can, ironically, augment identity. It is no accident that the majority of people in Ireland, whether in the independent Republic of Ireland or in Northern Ireland, still believe in Columbanus' vision, though the latter have been taken out of the European Union against their stated preference in the referendum of 2016.

Flechner and Meeder (2016: 2) observe that the voice of classically-trained Irish *perigrini* was one in a choir of many on a European continent that was impressively well-connected ethnically, economically, culturally, intellectually and spiritually. In these current times when Brexit has put a spanner in Columbanus' works, it is worth being reminded that Ireland's medieval diaspora is also a necessary bridge to that other island which benefitted from the Irish monks who brought their Christian faith to Britain. The names of Colmcille (521–97), missionary to Scotland, and Áedán (d. 651), missionary to England, resonate still, and many waves of Irish emigrants have, for centuries right up to the present day, made their lives in Great Britain. The impact on Britain of the medieval Irish *peregrini* awaits a reassessment, which Loveluck and O'Sullivan (2016: 20) assert is 'an essential prerequisite to understanding the role and impact of the Irish in early medieval Europe'.

So, while insisting on keeping a focus on that which Ireland is well known for, the *peregrini pro Christo*, and on the leitmotif of the political, it is also fascinating to revisit through contemporary archaeology, for instance, those links between Ireland and Britain and Continental Europe, which we need to know if we are truly to know ourselves. As Griffin Murray (2024) and Rachel Moss (2024) demonstrate, in a parallel publication generated alongside this one by Isabelle Torrance's European Research Council project, artefacts of Irish material culture deemed quintessentially native, such as the 'Tara' brooch, the Ardagh chalice and Celtic high crosses, actually derive from classical or late antique Roman models, in some cases mediated through Roman Britain.

We now know that early medieval Ireland was no remote, dull backwater, but rather a place of rapid population growth, with a dynamic and innovative agriculture-based economy, which participated actively in trading networks with Britain, France and the Atlantic side of Iberia. But the reduction in those links after the mid-seventh century points up an interrupted narrative, well captured by Irish Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney (1939–2013) and Tim O'Neill in their translation from a ninth-century Irish-language poem that featured in Christmas cards sent by Heaney in 2007 (300 copies were printed by the Gallery Press):

Is acher in gáith in-nocht
Fu·fúasna fairggae findfholt.

Ni ágor réimm Mora Minn
Dond láechraid lain úa Lothlind

Wind fierce to-night
Mane of the sea whipped white
I am not afraid. No ravening Norse
On course through quiet waters

Ours is an unsteady world, with an awful past that by and large reflects little credit on human nature. The genuinely heroic have too often been overshadowed, even vanquished, by colonizers, imperialists, invaders, oppressors of one sort or another. The colonizers and colonized do not tell the same story or see the world through the same lens. The story of Ireland is telling in that regard, for the Irish are a people who were later violently colonized. Their culture, language and religion became major targets of repression by their neighbour in Britain over many centuries, and their communities were ravaged by forced migration, poverty and hunger. Yet often it was the success stories of their remarkable *peregrini* ancestors, told right across Continental Europe, which helped keep alive a flame of self-respect and determination. That profound Continental sensibility and sense of belonging among the Irish diaspora (see Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 in this volume) remains an active ingredient, a leaven in today's Ireland, as a unique militarily neutral voice for peace through dialogue, a voice in which is distilled the wisdom of the centuries that stretch back to Columbanus.

To lift a contemporary book in Italian on today's town of Bobbio, where Columbanus founded a celebrated monastery, is to find Columbanus still centre-stage, with Bobbio's history divided into the era before and the era after Columbanus. To talk to Italian schoolchildren there is to be amazed that Columbanus is as real and present to them as if he had just popped down the street for a take-away cappuccino. And that is what is in the gift of the research offered here. To draw from these deep wells of courage, dug in difficult medieval times, the fresh water with which to revitalize, reengage, reinvigorate a Europe where the bureaucracies, hierarchies and structures built around the Christian religion are crumbling but the intellectual imprint of those medieval Irish monks may yet prove more enduring. For they brought above all transcendent faith in a Creator capable of unifying humanity, not fragmenting it. That imprint is not easily amenable to archaeological searches, for it rests in the soul, the mind, the heart, the thought of individuals. It is often latent, asleep, until awakened, restored to memory, put to use in another time and context. It is capable of overlooking Columbanus' disputes with just about everyone he encountered, popes and kings and fellow monks included. It is capable of forgiving Colmcille's row over copyright in which he was in the wrong. It is capable of ignoring interruptions and breaks in continuity. It is capable of tempering hagiography. It sees Columbanus' hand in the form of Catholic confession, but he is not of Reformation or Counter-Reformation. In fact, he is a shared platform for inspiration of Reformation and Counter-Reformation descendants alike.

Today we hold fast to something great in the courage of those *peregrini*. It feels comfortable walking on the paths they trod, among the people they made their own, across a continent of diverse nations and cultures, of many languages and too many wars.

For, in the end, these men opened Ireland and Europe up to the great, diverse, messy human family that makes history. While others traded goods, they traded ideas, among them the most intriguing and hopefully most enduring and yet untried of ideas – that love of one's neighbour could change the world, and that this was a command from God, not a choice.

Aidan Larkin, biographer of Columbanus, looking at all the disputes he managed to get into about Church customs and norms, has written a letter based on Columbanus' own writings in answer to the litany of complaints against him, not all of which were without foundation it should be said, for Columbanus was an argumentative man. But he was also a convinced follower of Christ, and so these contentious issues were in many ways by the by. What was overarching, what was unifying and non-negotiable, was that commandment to love one's neighbour, and so Columbanus says:

> Let us all be truly humble and spiritual men fulfilling Christ's commandment to love one another as He has loved us. Do not, I beseech you consider us estranged from you. That would be unthinkable. For we are all members of the one Body of the Lord. Whether Frenchmen, or Britons, or Irishmen or whatever nation we belong to.
>
> *Larkin 2012: 118*

Somewhere in Ireland's tradition of military neutrality, somewhere in President Éamon de Valera's words to the British officer to whom he surrendered in 1916 after helping lead the uprising against dreadful British rule, when he said 'The Irish do not like to fight', somewhere in the search for peace that was the hallmark of that great European statesman John Hume, somewhere in our very particular but yet supportive response to the tragic unfair Russian attack on Ukraine, is an imprint of the utterly essential Columbanus, stripped of everything except the idea that prompted him to set sail from Bangor in a small boat and make land in a hostile Continental Europe. Somewhere in the thinking of those who constructed the European Union as a gift of peace through partnership, for the centuries to come, is the still fresh imprint of Columbanus. As this collection shows, moreover, the trace of classical antiquity in representations and circumstances of Irish migrations manifests frequently through religious experiences connected with contemporary politics. This is evident in the classical education of the religiously motivated *peregrini* (Chapter 2); in the biblical and Graeco-Roman parallels in migration narratives on Irish origins (Chapters 3 and 5); in the transfer of Irish monastic learning to Scandinavia (Chapter 5); in the classically-influenced writings of exiled Catholic authors writing in Neo-Latin and in Irish on the Continent (Chapters 6 and 8); in the legal argumentation of Irish Franciscans in Europe drawing on Roman law (Chapter 7); in the international circulation of visual classicism in illustrated Irish manuscripts (Chapter 9); in Irish migration satire evoking religious politics (Chapter 10); in religiously-inflected Irish migration experiences to Newfoundland described in Virgilian tropes (Chapter 11); in the artistic validation of ancient Rome found by Irish artists in the Papal city (Chapter 12); in the role of Catholic clergy for providing Irish-

language access to Graeco-Roman literature (Chapter 14); and in Seamus Heaney's mapping of contemporary Irish sectarian conflict through the lens of Virgilian migration and dispossession (Chapter 17).[3]

Notes

1. Certain claims made by Cahill in his 1994 book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, have been disputed as overexaggerated; see O'Rorke, Chapter 2: 28–9, for an overview of the debate.
2. *Columbanus-The First European*, a 'Drama on One' radio documentary on Raidió Telefís Éireann's (RTÉ's) Radio 1, broadcast 1 November 2015, https://archive.org/details/saint-columbanus-the-first-european; and *Mary McAleese and the Man who Saved Europe*, a film co-production made by Clean Slate for RTÉ and BBC Northern Ireland, November 2015. See also Cahill 1995: 188–92.
3. This Foreword was given as the Keynote Address to the Conference 'Irish Migrations and Classical Antiquity', hosted at Antikmuseet (The Antiquities Museum), Aarhus University, Denmark, 1 November 2022. The text has been very lightly edited for publication.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research for this book has been generously supported by a Consolidator Grant from the European Research Council (grant no. 818366), which has also covered the cost of Open Access publication, and it is a great pleasure to acknowledge that support. Aside from this essential funding, the results presented in this volume are entirely indebted to the enthusiasm, collegiality and generosity of each and every contributor. Special thanks are due to former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, who found time in her impossible schedule to visit Aarhus, along with her husband Martin, to give the keynote lecture at the November 2022 conference which generated this book, and to send in the finished text as our volume's Foreword. In the centenary year of Irish independence, it was an honour and a privilege to host the McAleeses, who brought with them a characteristic warmth of spirit and a wide range of intellectual insights.

Each contributor to this volume responded to an invitation to address the intersection of migration history, Irish identity and classical antiquity within their respective fields and time periods. Each rose to the challenge in ways that move the Humanities forward, creating new knowledge in individual fields and collectively revealing significant cultural patterns and shifts. These collaborations have been unequivocally uplifting and inspiring, and I am grateful to every contributor for their dedication to the project.

Further thanks are due to colleagues at Bloomsbury, Alice Wright and Zoe Osman, with whom it has been a pleasure to work again, as well as Lily Mac Mahon, who first contacted me about the Classical Diaspora series, and to the series editors Sarah Annes Brown and Katharine Harloe. Finally, it continues to be a privilege to work at Aarhus University, where research in the Humanities is valued and promoted.

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Sankt Hans 2024

CHAPTER 1
IRISH MIGRATIONS AND CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY: INTRODUCTION

Isabelle Torrance

The Irish diaspora is estimated to number approximately 70 million people, as referenced in, for instance, the Government of Ireland's 'Diaspora Strategy 2025' and current 'Global Ireland' initiative.[1] For a small island, with a population of approximately seven million (just over five million in the Republic and just under two million in Northern Ireland), Ireland's diaspora is ten times its resident population. This extraordinary feature of the global Irish community is deep-rooted in centuries of mass emigration, and one would be hard-pressed to find an Irish person unaffected by migration, either personally or through the emigration of family members. For most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Ireland had the highest emigration rates in Europe. In 2016, the creation in Dublin of EPIC: The Irish Emigration Museum generated a critically-acclaimed series of interactive experiences for visitors to explore the history and impact of Irish emigration. Founded by philanthropist Neville Isdell, former CEO of Coca-Cola, who emigrated from Co. Down in Northern Ireland with his family in 1953 at age ten, the museum was voted Europe's Leading Tourist Attraction for three consecutive years (2019, 2020, 2021) and hosts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.

Historically, Irish experiences of migration have cut across all social, political and religious lines, variously impacting rural and urban communities, working classes and elites, the untrained and the highly educated, men and women, nationalists and unionists, Catholics and Protestants. Migration is arguably a key facet of Irish identity across and within the diversity of what it means to identify as Irish, and the theme emerged as a crucial site for intersectional study in the project 'Classical Influences and Irish Culture', funded by the European Research Council (grant no. 818366), which has generously sponsored the results presented in this book. Recent years have seen a shift in immigration patterns, where Ireland has increasingly become a destination for migrants, creating a new nexus of Irish identity experienced through *immigration* particularly for second generations born in Ireland. I return to this point in the *Envoi* (Chapter 18), and it will be an important consideration for future research, but the main focus of this volume is charting the intersection of migration *from* Ireland and expressions or manifestations of that experience as influenced by models or paradigms from ancient Greece and Rome. The sum of the chapters in this book demonstrates that classical antiquity has consistently pervaded Irish articulations and instantiations of migration from the earliest periods of its written history and education right through to the global impact of its leading twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers. Why is classical antiquity so important for understanding the intersection of migration and Irish identity? This book proposes that

ancient Greece and Rome lie at the root of a variety of Irish migration narratives and experiences representing four central and often interconnected causes of migration: warfare or colonization; economic necessity or opportunity; education and knowledge transfer; and religious grounds.

Religion

Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, has brilliantly sketched out in her Foreword how and why religion is so deeply and historically embedded in an Irish experience of migration which draws on classical antiquity, dating back to the medieval period. The significance of this intuitive connection between medieval Christianity and 'pagan' antiquity, made so eloquently by McAleese, deserves to be underlined. The recently published Open Access volume *Classical Antiquity and Medieval Ireland* (Clarke, Poppe and Torrance 2024), also produced by the 'Classical Influences and Irish Culture' project (ERC grant no. 818366), demonstrates that, for the medieval Irish, the Graeco-Roman pagan and Christian worlds were entirely enmeshed in a synchronistic worldview of history, with Ireland often placed as a central power on the international cultural stage (cf. Torrance 2024a: 399–400). Late antique and early medieval universal histories placed biblical and classical events side-by-side, often treating 'mythology' (as we would conceive it) as historical fact, and creating synchronisms ultimately derived from or inspired by Eusebius of Ceasarea's fourth-century *Chronicon*, translated from the Greek into Latin by Jerome (Blanco Ríos, Chapter 3, this volume).

The separation of 'classical' and 'Christian' is a recent and historically problematic phenomenon. As Jason O'Rorke points out (Chapter 2), Irish Christian intellectuals in the medieval period did not see any issue with their heavy dependence on the literary and philosophical resources of pagan antiquity. Following the example of leading Christian thinkers such as St Augustine, who believed firmly in the value of studying classical literature so long as it was subordinated to Christian wisdom, the Irish mined 'pagan' texts for insights on everything ranging from grammar to history and metaphysics. Late antique Christian authorities, such as Orosius (a Roman priest, historian and theologian, student of St Augustine) and Isidore, Archbishop of Seville, were enormous influences on the migration narratives describing the origins of the Irish people. As Pau Blanco Ríos shows (Chapter 3), the foundational text on Irish history, *Lebor Gabála Érenn* ('The Book of Invasions of Ireland'), employs a classically-inspired Orosian geography to describe Irish migrations, while the works of Isidore of Seville narrating migrations, including those of the Goths, Blanco Ríos argues, serve as further models for Irish historiography. Irish identity is highlighted, as Blanco Ríos observes, through the interconnection of the classical, the late antique and the biblical, with Irish migration origins traced to Scythia (or Greece), unlike those of the Franks and Britons who claimed their origins in Trojan roots.

If McAleese focuses our attention on Columbanus, as the most important of the first classically-trained religious migrants to travel from Ireland as a successful missionary-

scholar to Europe, she also reminds us of the shared heritage that pre-schism intellectuals can represent across the sectarian divisions on the contemporary island of Ireland. That theme reappears in the cultural history of Irish receptions of Platonism, as demonstrated in the case studies gathered in a further publication of the 'Classical Influences and Irish Culture' project – *Irish Platonisms: Cultural Interactions from the Seventh to the Twentieth Centuries* (Watson and Torrance 2026; ERC grant no. 818366). From the early modern period onwards, both Catholic and Protestant intellectuals, across the sectarian divide of Irish politics, have sought inspiration on the common good through Platonic sources; examples discussed in Watson and Torrance (2026) include Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa, George Rust, Lady Anne Conway, Jonathan Swift, George Berkeley, W. B. Yeats, AE (George Russell), James Joyce, Stephen MacKenna, Liam Ó Rinn, George Thomson, Domhnall Ó Mathghamhna, C. S. Lewis and Iris Murdoch. Classical antiquity, metaphysics and religion are demonstrably connected for Irish thinkers.

The extent to which religion enters into dialogue with Graeco-Roman antiquity in the various chapters of this book has been sketched out at the end of the Foreword (xvii–xix), and will be further addressed here through the ways it intersects with the other three thematic strands that permeate the volume. I turn now to education and knowledge transfer as causes for migration which have also, historically, been linked to religion.

Education and knowledge transfer

Apart from the proactive *peregrini* of the medieval period, whose missions combined religious and educational goals, the years spanning the early modern period and into the eighteenth century saw numerous Irish Catholics seeking educations in Continental Europe as a result of the Penal Laws, which deprived Catholics of access to education in Ireland (discussed further below, 8–9). Many who began training for the priesthood never actually entered the Church but returned to Ireland and passed on their knowledge as teachers in illegal schools, the so-called 'hedge-schools'. As Laurie O'Higgins (2017) has demonstrated, knowledge of classical Latin and of classical authors was accessible to many otherwise disadvantaged students through such schools, and through the efforts of often impoverished but brilliant teachers who had trained on the Continent.

One such figure, who enrolled to study for the priesthood in Rome but did not complete his training, is the eighteenth-century poet Donncha Rua Mac Conmara. Best known for his satire riffing off Virgil's *Aeneid*, *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* ('The Voyage of a Hostage to Misfortune'), Mac Conmara reworks his model by layering in lived experiences of Irish migration and its hardships while simultaneously reframing traditional Irish *aisling* ('vision') poetry to function in tandem with Graeco-Roman paradigms (Ó Liatháin, Chapter 11). The premise of the poem is a migratory journey to Newfoundland, during which the poet, like Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*, enters Hades, but here finds himself in the company of a conflation of figures from both classical and Irish literary and political history. As Ó Liatháin shows, Newfoundland was a particularly notable destination for Irish migrants in the eighteenth century; its Irish name, 'Talamh an Éisc' ('The Fishing

Grounds'), is unusual in being so distinct from the English toponym and references the fact that Irish migrants worked as fishermen in this harsh and inhospitable landscape, with which the poet was also acquainted. Donncha Rua's migration narrative evokes Irish political *aisling* poetry when he enters the Virgilian world of Hades, and the Irish fairy goddess Aoibheall appears to accompany the poet to the Underworld. Such a female vision figure would normally personify Ireland in eighteenth-century Irish poetry, lament her oppressed state and predict a future victory over her oppressors. The model is subverted, however, through the male voice of Conán Mac Mórna, a member of the fianna (band of warriors) and a traditionally riotous figure, who guides the poet in Hades and is the one who predicts the restoration of the Stuart dynasty and the downfall of the English. Donncha Rua follows Virgil in having a male guide for his protagonist in the Underworld, thus disrupting Irish poetic tradition. The disruption insists on the satirical nature of the work – Conán is no Anchises, and there is no emotional connection between Donncha Rua and Conán to parallel the pathos of Aeneas meeting his dead father. The Virgilian frame, however, coupled with the ostensible journey to Newfoundland, underlines the ultimately serious and challenging nature of the real-world experiences of the migration being satirized. At the same time, the poet posits parity between Graeco-Roman antiquity and Irish tradition, continuing a claim that begins in the early medieval period with the proposal put forward in *Auraicept na nÉces* ('The Scholars' Primer') that the Irish language might be put on a par with the three 'sacred languages' Greek, Latin and Hebrew (see Engesland 2024, with further references).

Donncha Rua's *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* was circulated orally and in manuscript form, and around sixty manuscripts survive, as Ó Liatháin notes. This is typical for Irish-language literature which circulated primarily through manuscripts up until the nineteenth century, unlike other European contexts where print quickly became the dominant form of dissemination. The migration of some of these manuscripts and their owners, along with the classically-inflected visual ornamentation that accompanied the written texts, is the focus of Ó Muircheartaigh's discussion (Chapter 9), which sheds new light on the classicizing iconography found in important Irish manuscripts from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Classicizing architectural motifs adorn, for instance, *Leabhar na nUrnaightheadh gComhchoidchiond* ('The Book of Common Prayer', 1608), scribe Uilliam Ó Loinsigh's manuscripts of Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Érinn* ('Foundations of Knowledge on Ireland') and his *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* ('The Adventure of Melora and Orlando', inspired by Ludovico Arisoto's sixteenth-century Italian epic *Orlando Furioso*); other manuscripts present script as inscription, in emulation of the Roman epigraphic tradition; the laurel wreath, as classical symbol of victory, variously crowns the resurrected Christ, the exiled Gaelic chieftain Hugh O'Neill and title sections describing the literary character Oisín in manuscripts from different centuries; scribes Seán Ó Coileáin and Donncha Ó Floinn depict classicized Gaelic heroes. Throughout this broad-ranging discussion, Ó Muircheartaigh demonstrates how the classicizing imagery employed in Irish manuscripts reflects significant trends in the European Renaissance, Baroque and Romantic movements. The iconography is traced, moreover, to comparable examples from printed book culture and epigraphic tradition,

thus underlining the dynamic engagement of Irish scribes with European literary texts and public inscriptions.

If the Irish Franciscans at St Isidore's College in Rome attempted 'to render the Roman Irish and render the Irish Roman' through dual script (Latin and Irish text), painted to resemble an inscription over the entrance to the College's Aula Maxima (Ó Muircheartaigh, Chapter 9: 153), this exemplifies certain aspects of Irish experiences of exile on the Continent in the early modern period. The 'Roman' aspect of Catholicism, moreover, connected to Roman antiquity, formed a pointed contrast to the kind of *Romanitas* espoused by Protestant Irish writers based in Ireland during this period, for whom a notion of ancient *Romanitas* was central to the British imperial project (see Harris and Sidwell 2009). Following the defeat of the Catholic Gaelic chieftains by Protestant colonizers in 1607 and their subsequent flight to refuge in other Catholic countries, many Irish intellectuals sought to assert connections between Ireland and classical antiquity as a means of validating Irish (Gaelic) claims to the sovereignty of Ireland and rejecting allegations of native Irish 'barbarism' such as those made by Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales, *c*. 1146–*c*. 1223), which became influential in the early modern period as Levin discusses (Chapter 6). What we know about those Catholic exiles, Campbell observes (Chapter 7), was often written by learned Irish Catholic clergy interested in the intertwined histories of the Irish Church and the Irish nation. The issue of migration and travel, moreover, was one debated in the intellectual clerical circles of early modern Europe. Focusing on the *ius communicandi*, or 'right to travel', with its strong classical origins in Roman law, Campbell traces how the Irish Franciscans contributed to the theoretical arguments concerning the right to travel, preach, colonize and enslave at a key juncture in European history.

Campbell shows how the views of Franciscans, and Scotists, on the *ius communicandi* differed from those of the Thomists (Dominicans and, to some degree, Jesuits). Where the latter asserted a natural right to travel, that could limit or direct the power of states or princes through recourse to the application of natural law, the former were focused on the *ius praecandi*, 'right to preach', seen as a divine command, as the legal justification for traversing state boundaries. Irish Franciscans, moreover, believing that Scotus had been Irish, had a further patriotic reason to defend Scotist theology. In the context of the imperialist expansion of Catholic Spain, this legal right to preach the Gospel provided a possible justification for colonialist policy. Scotus held conflicting views on slavery. On the one hand, he disapproved of slavery, as Campbell discusses, 'yet also believed that positive laws about slaves had to be obeyed'; as such, for Scotus, a master had the legal right to sell off an enslaved husband and wife to owners in different countries (Campbell, Chapter 7: 111). One Irish Scotist, Raymond Caron (1605–66), whose works are discussed by Campbell (Chapter 7), insisted on a hardline understanding of the *ius praecandi* by which Franciscans could travel and preach freely as they wished. Caron met with significant opposition in Rome, however, and his treatise on the subject was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books.

Intellectual and scholarly exchange between migrant Irishmen and Continental peers is a key feature of Irish migration history. This transfer of knowledge ranges from big

debates on legal and religious issues, such as those discussed by Campbell, to the minutiae of etymologizing addressed by O'Rorke (Chapter 2). If early Irish scholars can be perceived as somewhat obsessed with etymologies, their guidebook to the field was Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, which can be described as 'a synthesis of classical and Christian learning' (O'Rorke, Chapter 2: 30; Krivoshchekova 2026 argues for a distinctive Platonic inflection to Irish etymologizing, all the while acknowledging the significance of Isidore's *Etymologies*). So influential was this work that it generated an apocryphal tale recounting how the only copy of the famous Irish epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge* ('The Cattle-Raid of Cooley') was given away in exchange for a copy of Isidore's precious *Etymologies* (see further Blanco Ríos, Chapter 3: 48, this volume).

The deployment of etymological analyses to extract additional information from texts about Graeco-Roman mythology is, as O'Rorke shows (Chapter 2), a distinctive feature of early Irish scholarship. Important medieval Irish texts such as *De Origine Scoticae Linguae* ('On the Origin of the Irish Language'), also known as O'Mulconry's Glossary, and the works of the Hiberno-Latin author Virgil the Grammarian show that words could be parsed by Irish scholars using combinations of possible etymologies from component parts of up to four languages, namely Irish, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, the latter two being less commonly employed than the former two. A combination of Irish-language and Latin-language etymologies made sense to the bilingual Irish, but must have been opaque to their fellow non-Irish-speaking scholars on the Continent. We know from Old Irish glosses on Continental manuscripts that these were studied by Irish scholars abroad, and evidence also suggests that Irish-language etymologies were subsequently copied by Continental scribes, demonstrating both the activity and the impact of classically-trained Irish scholars abroad (O'Rorke, Chapter 2).

The intellectual centre at the monastery of Bobbio, founded by Columbanus, as McAleese reminds us (Foreword), and comprising a community of Irish, Gauls and Lombards, is a crucial location for tracing Irish influence on Continental scholarship. It produced the only surviving manuscript of the *Ars Ambrosiana*, an anonymous commentary on Donatus' *Ars maior* ('The larger Grammar'). The Irish presence is evidenced by the many books written in Irish script or glossed in the Old Irish language that were part of the monastic library at Bobbio, and the *Ars Ambrosiana* itself bears strong traces of Irish influence and possibly Irish authorship. Etymological, and arguably euhemeristic, interpretations contained in the *Ars Ambrosiana* of Calypso and Themisto as islands (rather than mythological figures) can be traced, respectively, to Orosian geography and an ambiguous gloss, and were repeated and elaborated on by the important Irish *peregrinus* Sedulius Scottus, appearing elsewhere in manuscripts that may have been produced by those in the circle of the famous Irish *peregrinus* Eriugena. Another Irish *peregrinus*, Murethach, by contrast, presents Calypso and Themisto as traditional nymphs (O'Rorke, Chapter 2).

The possibility of extracting valuable information on the migration and transfer of knowledge from studying such minutiae should not be underestimated. As Mikael Males demonstrates (Chapter 5), striking descriptions of the Old Norse Leviathan attest to the unusual influence of a classically-inspired Irish model. Males shows how a classical motif

derived by the Irish from Macrobius is transferred to the Old Norse world-encircling serpent, the Miðgarðsormr ('serpent of middle-earth') through vernacularization and oralization. The particular detail that characterizes the Leviathan as a 'tail-biting' dragon (an *ourobouros*) is significant in Irish sources, appearing, for instance, in an Old Irish gloss on the Psalms, in the medieval tale *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* ('The Destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel'), and in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* ('Voyage of Saint Brendan'). Since Nordic seafarers during this period were, for all practical purposes, illiterate, Males offers us here a rare insight into a transfer of knowledge that must have been predicated on oral exchange. Later written texts record the Leviathan motif and give access to earlier oral traditions, and it makes sense that in Irish–Norse cultural exchange, which was based on nautical travel and migrations, a particular Irish instantiation of a sea-monster, in this case based on a classical paradigm ultimately derived from scholarly study of Macrobius, would capture the Norse imagination.

Males (Chapter 5) thus contributes to our understanding, at the micro level, of how culturally significant tropes filtered from classical antiquity through Irish sources and into Norse mythology. On the macro level, as Mathias Egeler has shown, broader medieval Norse concepts of otherworldly locations accessed by seafaring, described in accounts of Norse migrations to North America, can also be traced to Graeco-Roman sources filtered through contact with their early Irish vernacular adaptations (Egeler 2017; on medieval Irish vernacular versions of Graeco-Roman texts, see Clarke, Poppe and Torrance 2024). In the case of the marine Leviathan, Males argues that its highly visual characteristics, as can be seen depicted on runestones (Figure 5.1), may have been the key to its oral transfer and appropriation.

Visual classicism, the Irish and the Scandinavian would collide again in nineteenth-century Rome, through the friendship and mutual admiration which developed between the Irishman John Hogan and the Dane Bertel Thorvaldsen, both neo-classical sculptors who found themselves in Italy for their artistic education. Hogan's classicizing religious sculptures, in particular, bear the mark of Thorvaldsen's influence. For nineteenth-century Irish artists, as for others in Europe, training in Rome was considered essential, although politics and circumstances dictated that most Irish artists were unable to secure sufficient patronage at home and often remained abroad following their initial migration for further education. Hogan did, in fact, receive commissions in Ireland, most notably his monumental statue of Daniel O'Connell (1846). His *Dead Christ* was purchased for St Therese's Church, Dublin (1829; Figure 12.4), with a second version (1833) in St Finbarr's Church, Cork, and a final version (1854) in the Basilica of St John the Baptist, Newfoundland. Hogan also returned to live in Ireland in 1848, after twenty-four years in Rome, a move motivated by increasing revolutionary activity in Italy in the 1840s. As Ciarán Rua O'Neill demonstrates (Chapter 12), however, Hogan's lengthy period away from Ireland and immersion in the artistic scene at Rome did nothing to dampen his identity as a Catholic and nationalist Irishman. O'Neill argues that Hogan brought a particularly political dimension to his work in conflating the classical with the religious. While other contemporary artists focused increasingly on the female nude, Hogan's early career in Rome produced striking interpretations of the classicizing male nude, notably *Shepherd Boy* (1824–5; Figure 12.2)

and *Drunken Faun* (1826; Figure 12.3), which preceded his *Dead Christ* (1829). This sculptural form of the idealized male nude, with its latent homosocial symbolism of political value, becomes, O'Neill argues, a vehicle for nationalist political expression in the hands of Hogan. The inherent politicization of the male nude is evident in the diametrically opposed reception of Hogan's works by the two main political streams in nineteenth-century Ireland. His *Drunken Faun*, for instance, was greeted among the Anglo-Irish Protestant establishment as an example of Catholic Irish degeneracy, while for Catholic or nationalist writers it was a paradigm of unparalleled 'grace' (O'Neill, Chapter 12: 220–9).

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were particularly important periods for classically-trained Irish artists studying and working abroad (see also Figgis 2024, Mulvin 2024, Murphy 2024). Indeed, the recent volume *Graeco-Roman Influences in Irish Visual and Material Culture* (O'Neill and Torrance 2024), also published under the auspices of the European Research Council (grant no. 818366), demonstrates that experiences of travel and migration had a major impact on the classicizing work of Irish practitioners throughout Irish history. From the medieval workmen who crafted some of the finest Irish artefacts, such as the Ardagh chalice and the 'Tara' brooch (Murray 2024), to contemporary artists like Stephen McKenna, whose residence in Italy inspired his Pompeiian-style works, and Sam Walsh, whose series of abstract *Odyssey* paintings reflect Walsh's own migrations (O'Byrne 2024), travel and contact with the physical remains of Graeco-Roman antiquity have played a key role in the generation of Irish artistic and material culture.

Economic necessity or opportunity

Of these numerous instances of intersections between Irish migration, education or knowledge exchange, and models from classical antiquity, a significant proportion of cases are driven by economic necessity. Religion also played a role in determining economic factors, whether through religiously-motivated wars in the early modern period that drove dispossessed Gaelic Catholic chieftains from Ireland to the Continent (Darwin, Chapter 8), or through economic hardships resulting from British colonial policy.

The so-called 'Penal Laws' mainly impacted Irish Catholics, but also 'dissenting' Protestants such as Presbyterians, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. From 1607, for instance, the same year several prominent Gaelic leaders fled to the Continent, Irish Catholics (and non-Anglicans) were banned from holding public office. The Adventurer's Act of 1640 enabled large-scale land confiscations from major Catholic landowners, while the subsequent 1652 Act of Settlement prohibited Catholics from becoming Members of Parliament. Catholic clergy were expelled or forced into hiding. The 1695 Education Act prohibited the operation of schools in Ireland by non-Anglicans, and further banned travel abroad for the purposes of education. The latter could not effectively be enforced, particularly where individuals had either means or patronage, and illegal non-Anglican schools could not be prevented from operating. Some of these acts of Parliament, moreover, were revoked or mollified in the later seventeenth century,

but the eighteenth century saw a renewed affirmation of discriminatory laws against non-Anglicans, such as continued exclusion from public office, prohibition of inter-faith marriages and serious disadvantages for non-Anglican landowners. A number of relief acts, diminishing discrimination against Catholics were passed in the later eighteenth century leading, eventually, to the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act. This finally removed the barriers for Roman Catholics to serve as Members of Parliament and in the higher state offices, and was a triumph for lead agitator Daniel O'Connell.[2]

As O'Neill observes (Chapter 12), John Hogan's *Dead Christ* was completed in 1829, the same year as the Catholic Emancipation Act, and Hogan's sculpture can be read as an expression of grief at historic Catholic disenfranchisement. Hogan himself, the son of a carpenter father and a disinherited aristocratic mother, like many other young Irishmen who travelled to Rome for training, had relied on external patronage. In Hogan's case, the art dealer William Paulet Carey raised the necessary funding on recognizing the young man's talent (Minch 2009). The artistic education in Rome of the eighteenth-century Irish painter James Barry, also a young man of modest background, had earlier been sponsored by the Irish politician Edmund Burke. The work of the Catholic Barry, like that of Hogan, can also be read along intersectional lines of classicism and religious politics. His images of the wounded and suffering Philoctetes, for instance, inspired by the *Belvedere Torso* (Figgis 2024) represent the pain of Ireland's disenfranchised Catholics (Gibbons 2003: 70–1).

The migration of Irish artists such as these was not driven by the abjection of poverty or sudden dispossession, yet the fact that celebrated figures like Hogan and Barry either lived abroad for most of their career, in the former case, or never returned to live in Ireland, in the latter case, demonstrates the dearth of opportunity for artists to build careers in Ireland at that time. In fact, as O'Neill observes, Irish artists living abroad were more likely than those based in Ireland to receive important commissions for Irish public monuments. The nineteenth-century monument to Daniel O'Connell was assigned, controversially, to London-based Irishman John Henry Foley (O'Neill, Chapter 12: 201–2).

The experiences of Donncha Rua Mac Conmara, who also trained in Rome, then returned to Ireland and travelled to Newfoundland, reflect a more generalized experience of migration for economic purposes (Ó Liatháin, Chapter 11). The supplies listed on board Donncha Rua's Newfoundland-bound ship in *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, for instance, match similar records of actual emigrant ships making the same journey (Ó Liatháin 2018: 63). Another eighteenth-century Irish text discussed in this volume, the pseudonymous 1727 satire *A Trip to the Moon*, inspired by Lucian's *True History* via Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (Torrance, Chapter 10), also includes a realistic departure scene from Dublin, set in 1718, by the purported traveller and author Murtagh McDermot. Driven by ostensibly straitened circumstances, he offers his services to the master of a vessel bound for the Canary Islands, and lists its cargo of beef, butter, cheese, candles and soap (McDermot 1728: 5). Having landed in Tenerife, the author is then whisked up from a mountain peak in a whirlwind and ends up on the Moon. The Irish identity of the author, beginning with the pseudonym, is reinforced consistently through

references to Ireland and Irish customs. The authorial experience is framed as distinctively Irish, all the while presenting a thinly-veiled satire on Anglo-Irish politics which are mirrored on the Moon. The differences McDermot asserts, for instance, 'between *Whig* and *Tory*, *Protestant* and *Papist*', each man adhering to his position with unreasonable zeal (McDermot 1728: 21–2), are reflected in lunar society, which, although mostly Pythagorean, contains many other sects of philosophers with murderous intentions towards one another (McDermot 1728: 42).

The text resists giving an entirely clear indication of the author's political sympathies. McDermot asserts loyal servitude to King George I in the preface, but he later describes a lunar court with a hybrid, corrupt and tyrannical leonine king as a clear analogue for a British monarch. Since the author insists on the veracity of his fictional adventures on the Moon, the reader is invited to question any statements of truth made in the text. On the one hand, McDermot (1728: 23–4) praises George I's military achievements in contrast to the degeneracy of the Moon king. If we assume Jacobite sympathies in the author, it seems possible that George I's leniency after the Jacobite rebellion of 1715 and the relative stability of his reign may be reflected in this praise. At the same time, however, the crisis over the Wood's Halfpence affair in the 1720s provides a context for a negative relationship to British governance (Torrance, Chapter 10: 172–6).

McDermot eventually decides to return to Ireland, having constructed a makeshift rocket to transport him back to Earth from the Moon. He arrives back in Dublin in 1720, by way of Australia and Guinea, two years after his initial departure, and makes his way to the north of Ireland with plans to settle there, thus ironically establishing himself at the centre of a contemporary emigration exodus from Ulster. Prior to his return, McDermot had considered remaining permanently on the Moon, offering to serve in the Moon King's army (McDermot 1728: 58, 80), thus evoking a path frequently taken by Irish emigrants. Philip O'Sullivan Beare, for instance, discussed by Levin (Chapter 6), had served in the Spanish army after his family was dispossessed in 1602, and died in exile. In the satire, *A Trip to the Moon*, McDermot's return to Ireland is encapsulated in a parody of classical military conquest when the author asserts 'I went, I saw, I return'd', evoking and reframing the famous phrase attributed to Julius Caesar, *veni, vidi, vici* – 'I came, I saw, I conquered.' With 'return'd' substituted for 'conquered', McDermot highlights that he has chosen a non-military path of migration and return.

Economic and career opportunities of various kinds have spurred economic emigration from Ireland among all social classes for centuries. In a more recent example, the upbringing abroad of Eavan Boland in her formative early years (aged six to fourteen), following the career of her diplomat father, is a significant thread in her poetry. Boland herself later worked and lived extensively in the United States, teaching at Stanford University from 1996 until her death in 2020. Notions of exile as physical displacement and as gendered exclusion pervade Boland's work, and are frequently articulated through paradigms from Graeco-Roman mythology (Lavan, Chapter 13). The poetry of Ovid, who was famously forced into exile from Rome to the Black Sea in 8 CE for 'a song and an error' (generally assumed to be a reference to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* ('The Art of Love')), is central to Boland's own oeuvre. The opening set of poems in her 2014 collection, *A*

Woman Without a Country, is titled 'Song and Error', alluding directly to Ovid's exile, in a volume whose title evokes a permanent state of exile. As Rosie Lavan shows, the Ovidian myths of Ceres (Demeter) and Persephone, and of Orpheus and Eurydice, are crucial for Boland's poetry on journeys, separation and loss. Like Ovid, Lavan argues (Chapter 13: 249) that Boland enacts 'a transformation of exile from "historical reality" to "metaphorical motif"'.

A line from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8.188), taken from the section describing 'the long exile' of Daedalus (8.183–4, *longum . . . / exilium*), serves as a distinctive epigraph for James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (his only major work to include an epigraph; on the more general significance of Ovid in Joyce's work, see Shork 1997: 154–83). As the master craftsman Daedalus languishes in Crete pining for his native land, trapped by the sea on all sides, the pain of exile spurs him to invent an ingenious mode of flying to escape his imprisonment. The epigraph 'and he sets his mind to unknown arts' (8.188, *et ignotas animum dimittit in artes*) describes this process, and the allusion in Joyce is clearly connected to the main character of *Portrait*, Stephen Dedalus, who functions, to a certain degree at least, as an avatar for the young Joyce himself (who had used the pseudonym Stephen Dedalus in some early twentieth-century publications). The autobiographical correspondences between Joyce and Dedalus, however, should not be overstated, and Dedalus remains a fictional character, both in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses*. Nevertheless, the theme of exile evoked by the Ovidian quotation is highly pertinent to Joyce's adaptation of classical material, and economic precariousness is another Joycean concern. In *Portrait*, published in 1916, the young Stephen and his family are forced to move from bourgeois suburbia to central Dublin due to reduced circumstances arising from his father's debt; Stephen himself squanders a large financial prize he wins at Belvedere College; ultimately Stephen chooses voluntary exile in Europe, in spite of his deep affection for Ireland. In this latter sense, at least, Stephen Daedalus does reflect the real Joyce, who moved to mainland Europe in 1904 and never returned to live in Ireland.

Exile and economic insecurity are reworked differently in *Ulysses*. Famously structured around eighteen Homeric episodes, Joyce's *Ulysses* reconfigures one of literature's most poignant exile narratives. Where the migratory adventures of Homer's Odysseus span twenty years, Joyce's *Ulysses* is set on a single day in the streets and buildings of early twentieth-century Dublin. 'Exile' in *Ulysses* is experienced 'at home', through various kinds of social, religious and political exclusions. Like *Portrait*, which was written in Trieste and Zurich, *Ulysses* was composed at various stages in Trieste, Zurich and Paris from 1914 to 1921. Although the entire novel is set in Dublin, Joyce's own experiences of migration are deeply embedded in the fabric of *Ulysses*, not least through the literature and scholarship (classical and otherwise) he encountered through various libraries, bookshops and even newsstands during his travels. As Ronan Crowley shows (Chapter 15), moreover, the intersection of migration with economic considerations was key to the very publication of *Ulysses*. The subscription model for the first printing of *Ulysses*, devised by Sylvia Beach, would cover the costs of publishing and secure higher profits than the ordinary book trade. This also avoided any potential legal repercussions provoked by the novel's controversial content, since it would not be openly available.

From the 1,000 numbered copies to be printed, subscribers could pre-order a range of editions at various price points, from deluxe copies printed on expensive paper, and signed by Joyce, to those that were simply numbered.

The fact that serialized excerpts from the novel had met with prosecution for obscenity in various quarters added mystique and excitement to the publication, but securing subscribers remained an essential and labour-intensive task. Crowley (Chapter 15) discusses how Joyce and Beach, from their base in Paris, exploited their international migrant networks to secure subscriptions. New evidence presented by Crowley, based on archival research, further demonstrates how a disproportionate number of these subscribers were themselves migrants, in many cases with Irish connections. Moving us beyond the famous early subscribers such as Winston Churchill, T. S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, Virginia Woolf and others, Crowley (Chapter 15: 281–90) sketches outline biographies for non-elite subscribers, and underlines how the men and women of the Irish diaspora, coming from a variety of social and political backgrounds, played an important role in the success of *Ulysses*. John Quinn, for instance, a second-generation Irish American and a 'misogynist homophobe', subscribed for twelve copies. A further twelve copies went to some better-known Irish-born subscribers living abroad in London (e.g., Norah Hoult), Oxford (e.g., W. B. Yeats), Paris (e.g., Roderic O'Connor) and New York (e.g., Padraic Colum). Other Irish diaspora subscribers included Jenico Edward Preston, a career solider in the British Indian Army; Martyn Charles Andrews Hemphill, son of the 3rd Baron Hemphill of Rathkenny and Cashel; Geoffrey Rothe Clarke, Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs for British India; Alice Mary Killen, who worked at Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare and Company bookstore in Paris; second-generation Irish New Zealander Alfred Hall Skelton; and Abraham Jacob Leventhal, member of the Zionist Commission after the First World War.

If economic considerations were central to the subscription model for publishing *Ulysses*, they also necessarily played a role in the migrant experiences of the subscribers themselves. As Crowley reminds us (Chapter 15: 277), 'the ongoing phenomenon of wartime population displacement … had left millions of people – the Joyce family among them – uprooted and relocated within Continental Europe and across the world'. Fleeing the potential or probable destitution of warfare was a real-life concern in early twentieth-century Europe, and, by the time *Ulysses* was published in February 1922, Joyce's home country of Ireland had suffered the ravages of the First World War, of the failed 1916 rebellion, and of the Irish War of Independence (1919–21). War would break out again in June of 1922, as the Irish Civil War (1922–3) descended on the population following disagreement over the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

Warfare, colonization, postcolonialism

Contexts of warfare and colonization, and more recently postcolonialism, further permeate the Irish experiences and articulations of migration traced throughout this volume. The foundational medieval Irish text *Lebor Gabála Érenn* ('The Book of

Invasions of Ireland'), dating from the eleventh century, mentioned above as influenced by Orosius and Isidore of Seville, contains narrative historiographies describing successions of invaders and settlers to Ireland. Blanco Ríos (Chapter 3) focuses on the earliest medieval recension of *Lebor Gabála* (Recension A) and its presentation of the migration of various waves of settlers to Ireland as connected with ancient Greece and Scythia. Descended from Japheth, son of Noah, like all Europeans, the direct ancestor of the Gaels is a prince of Scythia, Fénius Farsaid. He weds the Egyptian princess Scota, whose name also evokes Irish identity, as Scoti (or Scotti) was the Latin name for the Gaels. Blanco Ríos notes (Chapter 3: 50) that a perceived etymological connection between the words 'Scoti' and 'Scythia' may have contributed to the narrative of the Scythian origins of the Gaels. In any case, Scota and Fénius Farsaid produce a son, Gáedel Glas, who creates the Gaedelic (Gaelic) language. They are subsequently driven into exile from Egypt at the same time as the Israelites (biblical Exodus), and Gáedel's descendants, the Gaels, make their way to Scythia. From there, the migration of the Gaels to their destined land of Ireland takes many generations; after numerous tribulations, they settle in Spain. Ireland is occupied by a succession of different invaders who control the island in turn before the Gaels finally settle there: Cessair, granddaughter of Noah; Partholón mac Sera (originating from Greece); Nemed; the Fir Bolg (who come from Greece); and the Túatha Dé Danann of Irish mythology. In each case the new invaders arrive and establish themselves but later disappear due to plague, exile or warfare. The Gaels then conquer the island and become the final settlers of Ireland.

According to *Lebor Gabála*, the Gaels themselves originate from Scythia, but an earlier ninth-century Irish historical poem, *Can a mbunadus nan Gáedel?* ('Whence the origins of the Gaels?'), written by Máel Muru Othna (a member of the monastic community at Othain, i.e. Fahan, Co. Donegal), claims Greece as the point of origin for the Irish people. This text is also our earliest surviving narrative on the migrations of the Gaels (see Blanco Ríos, Chapter 3: 43, and Fomin, Chapter 4: 56). From an early date, then, connections between ancient Ireland and ancient Greece were being asserted in certain texts on Irish origins and migration history. As Blanco Ríos argues (Chapter 3), these connections served to establish the Irish as significant participants in a synthetic universal history.

Lebor Gabála was an incredibly important and popular Irish text, existing in numerous copies between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries (Carey 2024: 340). This includes the latest recension of the work, the seventeenth-century O'Cléirigh recension discussed by Fomin (Chapter 4). As Fomin observes, O'Cléirigh's recension corroborates and expands upon the links to Greece found in the narrative on Irish migratory origins in Recension A. The connections to Greece of Partholón and the Fir Bolg are affirmed, and the tribes of Nemed are presented, additionally, as receiving military aid from Greece and from the daughter of the Greek king. O'Cléirigh's recension further imagines the Tuatha Dé Danann as inhabiting the northern islands of Greece and engaging in a military alliance with the Athenians in their combat against the Philistines. Thanks to magic learned in Greece, the Tuatha Dé Danann are able to revive dead warriors. As Fomin argues (61–2), the presentation of the Tuatha Dé Danann as allies of the Athenians

against the biblical Philistines means that their migration to Ireland can be read as a 'New Israel' origin narrative derived from engagement with biblical material.

In a much earlier version of the Irish migration narrative, composed towards the end of the tenth century in or around Metz in Lotharingia, preserved in the *vita* of the Scottish saint Cadróe, also discussed by Fomin (Chapter 4), we see an engagement with the alternative and pervasive Trojan origin narrative. The Gaels in this case follow a route that parallels the journey of Aeneas, but this stands alongside an emphatic assertion that the Irish are of Greek stock. A similar point has been made by Michael Clarke (2015), comparing Carolingian migration narratives with those found in *Lebor Gabála*, as Blanco Ríos observes (Chapter 3: 45). Although the Gaels often employed a geographical model of migration based on the wanderings of the Virgilian Trojans, they persistently traced their genealogical origins outside the Trojan tradition.

If the medieval Irish insisted that they were not descended from the Trojans, later early modern Irish authors would nevertheless cast themselves as metaphorical Trojans in poetry and historiography lamenting defeat in battle and exile caused by the devastation of war. Gregory Darwin discusses several poetic examples written after the defeat of the Gaelic chieftains and their flight to the Continent (1607), where the sack of Troy is presented as analogous to the fate of Ireland (Chapter 8). *Mo thruaighe mar atáid Gaoidhil* ('I pity the wretched state of the Gaels'), written by Fear Flatha Ó Gnímh, contemplates the fate of the Irish now deprived of their would-be protectors. He compares the bereft Irish to the Tuatha Dé Danann, the biblical Israelites and the people of Troy, demonstrating a continuity of expression from the medieval synchronisms, discussed above, which often evoke all three of these categories. The heroic Trojan defender Hector is named specifically as the kind of champion who might have faced the Saxons in combat. Another poem from this period, *Anocht is uaigneach Éire* ('Tonight Ireland is desolate'), which survives in multiple versions and is variously attributed to Ainnrias mac Marcuis or to Eoghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird, also focuses on the aftermath of the so-called 'Flight of the Earls', and again juxtaposes Gaelic, biblical and classical exempla (here the sack of Troy) to emphasize devastation. A more optimistic evocation of Troy by Mac an Bhaird occurs in *Fogus fortacht don tír thuaidh* ('Help is near to the North'), written *c.* 1608 for Aodh Ó Domhnaill (Hugh O'Donnell), the infant son of, and heir to, Rudhraighe Ó Domhnaill (Rory O'Donnell), both of whom were in exile in Rome. The younger Ó Domhnaill here is prophesied to save and restore Ireland. In this case, the first sack of Troy under King Laomedon is evoked, with the implication that Troy will be rebuilt, rather than the more famous second sack which concludes the Trojan War.[3]

In early modern historiographies of Ireland, also written by Catholic exiles on the Continent, but in Latin rather than in Irish, the Trojan War similarly features as an analogue for the sufferings of Ireland, notably in the works of seventeenth-century author Philip O'Sullivan Beare, exiled in Spain, as Levin discusses (Chapter 6). Describing the 1607 'Flight of the Earls', for instance, in his *Compendium of the Catholic History of Ireland*, O'Sullivan Beare (1621: 201r) quotes a passage from Virgil's *Aeneid* (2.361–9), which highlights the moment at which Troy was lost when the wooden horse released its

ambush by Greek soldiers. Classical poetry is important for O'Sullivan Beare, who compares himself to the exiled poet Ovid, quoting from *Tristia* (5.12.11–16; O'Sullivan Beare 1621: 1r). He further cites an extract from Ovid's *Letters from the Black Sea*, 4.8.47–56, asserting the value of poetry and the written word (O'Sullivan Beare 1621: 2v). Elsewhere, O'Sullivan Beare engages with the early modern metaphor of Circe's Cup, derived from the Homeric tale of Odysseus' men being turned into swine by consuming a concoction offered to them by the sorceress Circe (*Odyssey* 10). The metaphor, developed by Tudor and Stuart authors, as Levin discusses, asserted that Irish culture, like Circe's potion, had the power to turn the English into degenerates. This rhetorical trope was exploited to legitimize separation between English colonists and native Irish populations, but O'Sullivan Beare inverts the metaphor, insisting instead that English culture is, in fact, the 'Circe's Cup' that has infected and degraded the Irish through plantation.

The legitimacy of conquest and colonization was an ever-present concern for early modern intellectuals. We have seen above how the Irish Franciscans in Rome contributed to debates on the legality of migration in a variety of contexts, from preaching Christianity to the transport and exchange of slaves (see Campbell, Chapter 7). Irish authors themselves held differing views on the legitimacy of British claims to rule Ireland. O'Sullivan Beare rejected Stuart claims to the Irish throne. John Lynch, on the other hand, did recognize Stuart sovereignty over Ireland but demanded the political emancipation of Irish Catholics. In this he resembled Geoffrey Keating, whose *Foras Feasa ar Érinn* ('Foundations of Knowledge on Ireland'), like Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus* ('Cambrensis Refuted'), was written, in part at least, as a refutation of Giraldus Cambrensis' (Gerald of Wales) claims of Irish 'barbarity'.

John Lynch actively challenged British colonial policy in Ireland, alluding to models of government from classical antiquity, while casting himself as an exiled Cicero or Gratian, as Levin discusses (Chapter 6). Protesting against the exclusion of Irish Catholics (both Gaelic and Old English) from Parliament, for instance, Lynch invoked Cicero's *Against Verres*, where the accused is charged with having illegally substituted a colonist for a native in the Senate, a crime far surpassed, Lynch argues, by the British government's wholesale ban on native Irish Catholics holding parliamentary office (Lynch, trans. Kelly 1848: 27). Cromwellian cruelty is compared to that of the thirty tyrants installed at Athens after the Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War in another example (Lynch, trans. Kelly 1848: 43). Advocating for policies of self-governance, Lynch adduced models from ancient Athens, Sparta, Macedonia and Rome, as benevolent forms of settlement and empire to be contrasted with, and ideally emulated by, contemporary Britain (Levin, Chapter 6: 93–6).

While Lynch's praise for classical models of colonization obscures and sanitizes the undeniable violence and sufferings inflicted by ancient conquests, it serves a clear rhetorical purpose. In a further rhetorical flourish, examined by Levin, Lynch presents Ireland as a grieving Penelope, faithful to her husband the Stuart king, in a period when Irish Catholics were hoping for land restitution from the British monarch. The metaphor, which alludes to Penelope's letter to the absent Ulysses in Ovid's *Heroides* 1, proposes

that the absence of royal support and its impact on the loyal native Irish is tantamount to the consequences of Ulysses' extended absence from Ithaca, as his steadfast wife battles constant threats at home alone. While other Greek wives, like the other kingdoms of Britain, are secure with their husbands (who have returned from Troy), Ireland alone, like Penelope, languishes without spousal assistance. The return of Ulysses from the Trojan War, and the motif of the ruler as spouse of the land, are tropes that appear also in the early modern political poetry written by Gaelic poets, as Darwin discusses (Chapter 8). In a work addressed to Domhnall Ó Conchobhair Sligigh (Donnell O'Connor Sligo, d. 1611) by Eochaidh Ó hEodhusa, for instance, Domhnall, a long-serving member of the Spanish army, returns home like Ulysses to Penelope, who represents his homeland of Sligo. Just as Penelope was beset by greedy suitors, so too Sligo is beleaguered by competing land claims. Like Ulysses on his return to Ithaca, it is implied, Domhnall will restore peace and prosperity to Sligo.

Resistance to conquest and discriminatory governance emerges as a key theme in evocations of classical antiquity by Irish authors during the turbulent migrations of the early modern period. In fact, the evidence of Gaelic political poetry demonstrates a direct correlation between contemporary politics and a surge in references to Graeco-Roman myth and history in this genre, as Gregory Darwin shows (Chapter 6). The defeat of Pompey by Julius Caesar is another repeated analogue in the corpus, with a focus on Caesar's return to Rome to liberate it from illegitimate occupation; the exiled Pompey could also function as a parallel for illustrious Gaelic chieftains driven from Ireland (Darwin, Chapter 6: 120–3). Connecting Ireland to the ancestors of contemporary Rome, moreover, further emphasized the shared Roman Catholic religion of both peoples.

That religion, in general, and Roman Catholicism, in particular, underpins many articulations of Irish migration through the lens of classical antiquity has been discussed above. We have also observed how training at Catholic colleges on the Continent throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided Ireland with a supply of returning classically-educated teachers, some of whom had not completed their clerical training, as well as priests who had. Catholic priests, moreover, played a vital role in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century surge in Irish-language translations and editions of Greek and Roman literature. These included prominent figures, such as Archbishop John McHale, Peadar Ua Laoghaire and Patrick Dinneen, along with lesser-known clerics (e.g., Seán Mac Craith, Cathan Mac Giobúin, Art Mac Giolla Eoin, Liam Mac Philbín, Micheál Ó Baoigill, Pádraic Ó Laoi and Seán Ó Catháin; see Torrance and O'Rourke 2020: 21). Another distinguished advocate of translating Greek literature, in particular, into Irish was the cleric and polymath Pádriag de Brún. From the 1920s to the 1940s, de Brún translated into Irish Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Sophocles' *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*; Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*; and Plutarch's *Lives* of Alexander, Caesar, Pericles, Antony and Coriolanus. In 1954, de Brún also published *Stair na Gréige*, an Irish-language translation of the Irish historian John Bagnall Bury's *A History of Greece*, which had first been published in 1900 and was highly regarded throughout the twentieth century as a standard textbook in both Britain and Ireland. All of de Brún's translations from Plutarch and Greek tragedy

were published in the 1920s and 1930s, and the Sophoclean tragedies were staged (see Torrance 2024b). Extracts from de Brún's translations of Homer's *Iliad* were published in *Irisleabhar Muighe Nuadhad* (1926 (22): 12–15) and in *Humanitas* (1931 (ii): 14–16), but de Brún's translation of the *Odyssey*, *An Odaisé*, the subject of Richard Martin's discussion in this volume (Chapter 14), was published only posthumously in 1990, thirty years after his death, while his complete translation of the *Iliad* remains unpublished. De Brún's niece, the celebrated Irish poet Máire Mhac an tSaoi (1993: 141), suggests that Irish-language publishers lost interest in de Brún's translations from classical Greek during the early 1930s due to the increasingly inward-looking concept of national (and 'native') Irish-language literature that tightened its grip on Irish public opinion and consumption.

Of the texts de Brún chose to translate, it is notable that warfare and its impact are pervasive themes in each case, with the arguable exception of *Oedipus the King*, although the episode it dramatizes directly precedes Theban degeneration into civil war. Certainly, de Brún had first-hand experience of living in war-torn Ireland. He was a staunch nationalist and a close friend of, among others, Seán MacDiarmada, one of the leaders executed in 1916 for his role in the 1916 Rising. De Brún took the anti-Treaty side during the Irish Civil War, and was politically active to such an extent that he landed himself both in prison (briefly in 1923) and in hot water with his clerical superiors. From 1910 to 1914, de Brún had been living abroad, pursuing a doctoral degree in mathematics at the Sorbonne in Paris (awarded in 1912), followed by further advanced studies in Göttingen, Germany. It was the outbreak of the First World War that hastened his return to Ireland, where he took up a position at the Catholic seminary in Maynooth (for de Brún's biography, see White 2009 and Breathnach and Ní Mhurchú 2018). De Brún thus witnessed and experienced how conflict precipitates migrations and displacements of people. Given his deep-rooted interest in classical Greek literature, it is not surprising that he would turn his attention to translating one of the great epics on war-caused migration.

As Richard Martin demonstrates (Chapter 14), a distinctive Irish vocabulary of migration is marshalled by de Brún in *An Odaisé*, injecting the Greek epic with Irish experiences and concerns. The Irish *deoraí*, for instance, a word with a broad range of meanings including 'outsider, outcast, stranger, wanderer, exile', is skilfully exploited by de Brún to render the Greek term *xenos*, which means 'stranger', but also 'guest' and 'host'. A crucial element in de Brún's transposition of the Homeric *Odyssey* into the Irish language, as Martin discusses in detail, is his evocation of well-known Irish poetry from earlier centuries through comparable phrasing and motifs. This includes archaic terminology that shares linguist roots with cognate Greek terms. Greek *kleos*, for instance, meaning 'renown' and derived etymologically from 'what is heard', whose terminology relates heroic ideology and the power of oral poetic performance, is effectively rendered into Irish by *clú*, a word with similar meaning, etymological derivation and ideological significance. For Martin, de Brún's Irish translation captures a far wider range of meaning than most English translations, offering a parallel to Patrick Dineen's assessment of the Irish language as more accurate than English for translating ancient languages (see Mac Goráin 2020: 141). In a further subtle infusion of Irish culture into the Homeric epic, as Martin shows, de Brún evokes a variety of Irish poetic and literary genres through

terminology denoting *táin* ('cattle-raid') and *tóraíocht* ('pursuit') tales, as well as *caoineadh* ('keening') and satire, and through motifs employed in *aisling* ('vision') poetry, such as comparing the central female figure to a star. Throughout, de Brún pays careful attention to metre, alliteration and assonance, fusing elements from the Greek model with those of the Irish bardic tradition.

Although unpublished in his lifetime, de Brún's *An Odaisé* has been recognized as outstanding, as have his other translations of Greek literature into Irish (Mac Conghail 2016, quoted in Martin, Chapter 14: 275; see also Ní Mhurchú 2020: 89–90, with further references). This is due, in large part, to de Brún's own frequent migrations to the rural Dún Chaoin (Dun Quin) Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) area of Co. Kerry. De Brún was not a native Irish speaker, having learned Irish as an adult, and his mastery of the language came through vigorous and continuous consultation with Dún Chaoin locals as he worked through his translations. These communities were very much steeped in the traditions of oral performance and, as Martin reminds us (Chapter 14: 275), new verses referencing current events such as the First World War were often inserted by performers into otherwise traditional Irish poems, which ordinary people knew by heart. De Brún's *An Odaisé*, then, blends his own experiences of migration and warfare with those of some of the remotest communities of Western Europe.

Drawing on this culturally-specific knowledge, De Brún's instinct in translating Greek literature was, nevertheless, to engage directly with European culture. He translated into Irish further works by Racine, Corneille and Dante, as well as sections of the Icelandic Edda (Breathnach and Ní Mhurchú 2018). Latin literature was also valued by de Brún. He did not translate any Latin texts, but in 1957 he published the textbook *Tús Laidne trí Laidin Eaglasta* ('Beginning Latin through Ecclesiastical Latin'), aimed at promoting access to classical Latin through the ecclesiastical Latin with which many were familiar. Here, he asserted that the value of studying classical Latin authors was twofold. Alongside the Bible, the ancient teachings of Mediterranean authors, by which he meant Greek and Latin authors, were the basis of modern civilization. We see here, once again, the repeated and unproblematic twinning of religious and pagan texts by an influential cleric. Furthermore, according to de Brún, the Latin authors formed a bridge back to the all-important Greeks (see Ní Mhurchú 2020: 88 for full quotation and translation).

An Odaisé is an Irish *Odyssey* composed by a polymath with a European, international outlook, who had experienced a series of devastating wars. As such, it forms an important, and undervalued, Irish-language cultural counterpart to the world-famous Irish *Odyssey* produced by James Joyce, another magpie for knowledge (if lacking de Brún's talent for languages), with a European and international perspective impacted by war. De Brún must have been aware of Joyce's notorious *Ulysses*, and may even have read one of the copies gifted in 1922 to the National Library of Ireland and Trinity College Library (see also Crowley, Chapter 15: 288). One wonders if Joyce's *Ulysses* somehow influenced de Brún's decision to produce his translation; it is notable, for instance, that de Brún's translations of the *Oedipus* tragedies coincide almost directly with those of W. B. Yeats (see Torrance 2024b: 251–2). De Brún makes no mention of the controversial *Ulysses*, in any case, no more than he alludes to the medieval Irish version of the *Odyssey* of which

he must also have been aware, as Martin notes, but which is far removed from Homer (*Merugud Uilix Mac Leirtis*; for an overview of the text, see Hillers 2024).

From James Joyce to Derek Walcott, Homer's *Odyssey* has been influential for postcolonial authors. As Crowley observes (Chapter 15: 289), moreover, the distribution of printed copies of Joyce's *Ulysses* followed patterns of 'colonial lines, mirroring the regimes of mobility and immobility that had emerged in the postwar period'. This migration of Joyce's work, argues Kiron Ward (Chapter 16), is crucial to the influence of Joyce's Irish-inflected classicism on later postcolonial authors. Examining case studies from Argentina and India, Ward suggests that the global reception of Joyce's classicism provides a possible method for reading influence between Western and non-Western literatures. Focusing on literary networks, literary tradition and aesthetics, Ward argues, allows us to avoid the pitfalls of assumed standards or authenticity, which consistently undermine analyses of non-European literatures in their relationships with European cultures.

Ulysses was a key text for Jorge Luis Borges, as is well known, but also for his Buenos Aires contemporary Leopoldo Marechal. Ward discusses how the Anglophone West assumes a 'Borgocentric' dissemination of *Ulysses* in Latin America, prizing the liberal cosmopolitan Borges' engagement with the minutiae of Joyce's work. In doing so, the significance of Catholic nationalist (and ultimately Peronist) Marechal has been overlooked, although his 1948 *Ulysses*-inspired novel *Adán Buenosayres*, begun in 1930, has become one of Argentina's most important works of literature (see Cheadle 2014: 57–8, 75–7). Marechal and Borges represent two sides of the culture wars in early twentieth-century Argentina, a period, coincidentally, of significant Irish immigration to the country. While it is Joyce's epic-scale classicism that appeals to Marechal, along with its disruptive potential, Borges values the micro-level of Joycean linguistic detail.

It is similarly within the framework of language, specifically linguistic diversity and hybridity of the kind developed by Joyce in *Ulysses*, that Ward highlights the importance of this text for the postcolonial Anglophone Indian novel. Examining the Joycean linguistic hybridity and newness of G. V. Desani's *About H. Hatterr* (1948), and its impact on Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988), Ward demonstrates how that very hybridity contributed to the controversy surrounding Rushdie's novel. The hybridity of language, moreover, for Rushdie, is directly linked to mass migration, as Ward observes. Through references to Ovid, metamorphosis and the Ovidian image of malleable wax (Daedalus' wings were held together with wax), which appears throughout *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie alludes to Joyce's Ovidian Stephen Dedalus, and evokes both the power and dangers of inventive malleability.

If the image of wax represents creative potential, diversity remains, for Rushdie, more desirable than integration through a destructive kind of malleability. This is made clear, as Ward discusses, through the character of the Black British policeman PI Kinch, named after Stephen Dedalus' same nickname 'Kinch' in *Ulysses*. Unlike his namesake, PI Kinch abandons resistance to integration and succumbs to the prevailing hierarchical structures. Integration within specific cultural norms presupposes a level of fixity, and requires an attempt at rootedness which are at odds with the flux of diversity. Migration, above and

beyond the level of language identified by Rushdie, on the other hand, is a great contributor to social diversity. The ideal of cultural diversity, moreover, is very often in conflict with the everyday experiences of migrants and immigrants who may well choose, for a variety of reasons, to follow the path of Rushdie's PI Kinch. The well-known long-standing death-threats and violence experienced by Rushdie, as a result of the perceived blasphemy of *The Satanic Verses*, show first-hand how intolerance for diversity can be manifested.

Religious intolerance is a familiar historical problem in Ireland, most recently instantiated in the sectarian conflict that plagued Northern Ireland in the decades leading up to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, brokered by Mary McAleese among others, a conflict whose repercussions continue. It was in the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement that Northern Ireland native, and Nobel Laureate, Seamus Heaney composed the Virgilian eclogues published in his 2001 *Electric Light* collection, discussed by Rachel Falconer (Chapter 17). These poems reflect on modern experiences of migrancy and exile, as well as on the possibilities of peace, articulated through pastoral poetics for those accustomed to violence. Migrant alienation in Heaney comes in several forms evoking Virgil: leaving the rural community of Heaney's childhood parallels Virgil being forced to leave the countryside for Rome; Virgil's experience of civil war in the 40s BCE echoes Heaney's in contemporary Northern Ireland; finally, the persona of the herdsman in Virgil's *Eclogues* becomes for Heaney an avatar for the migrant refugee fleeing military violence, from the First World War in Europe to the present-day world stage.

Falconer charts how Heaney's eclogues (*Eclogues IX*, 'Glanmore Eclogue' and 'Bann Valley Eclogue') reflect the concerns of civilian communities and their daily survival during violent conflicts. In each case, pastoral scenes are presented against memories of warfare and the displacement of people. Heaney exploits Hiberno-English expressions and local dialect words, as often in his poetry, creating a direct link to Irish experiences; but his view of pastoral, which Falconer calls 'Odyssean', with its focus on ordinary people separated from their homes and their culture, is not in keeping with traditional definitions of pastoral as an elitist genre (Falconer, Chapter 17: 311). The implications of Heaney's Virgilian pastoral go well beyond Ireland, moreover. Imagery and motifs employed by Heaney in his Virgilian eclogues spill over into other poems, as Falconer shows, such as 'Known World' set in Macedonia in 1998 (i.e., following the Yugoslav Wars) and describing refugees fleeing war.

Heaney's prose writings connect Virgil's wandering shepherds directly with twentieth-century migrants displaced by conflict, as he considers other international wartime poets, such as the Polish Czesław Miłosz, whom Heaney presents as a modern-day Virgil in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, and Hungarian Miklós Radnóti, whose classical eclogues were written in the labour camp in which he died. As Falconer demonstrates, by reading Heaney's poems together with his prose works and lectures, we get a clearer picture of how local and national Irish concerns raised in Heaney's Virgilian pastoral are developed in the aftermath of 9/11 for a global application. This parallels Heaney's dual approach in his 2004 version of Sophocles' *Antigone*, *The Burial at Thebes*, where Irish and global politics are simultaneously woven into the fabric and language of the play (see Torrance

2020a: 330–2, with further references). Discussing the twin towers, and other towers, alongside pastoral, in a November 2001 lecture, Heaney asserts an opposition between towers and trees. Unlike towers, trees are a place of refuge, and pastoral, for Heaney, is a poetry of resistance and endurance.

If migration and displacement caused by conflict are central to Heaney's articulation of a Virgilian model of pastoral poetics, with both national and international significance, the kinds of migrations Heaney presents and discusses are widely varied, ranging from local dispossessed farmers, walking roads by land that is no longer their own, to refugees crossing international borders. Heaney's own migration from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland is also articulated through Virgilian pastoral in 'Glanmore Eclogue', published in the 2001 collection *Electric Light* but set in the early 1970s, when Heaney moved south to escape the Northern Irish conflict. Much earlier, in the poem 'Exposure' that concludes his 1975 collection *North*, Heaney had evoked the exile of Ovid, through the Ovidian word '*tristia*', while characterizing himself paradoxically as an 'inner emigré'. This notion of being an outsider in one's own country, to which Heaney refers, is rooted in the colonial history of the island of Ireland, a history of disenfranchisement, dispossession, forced exile and partition. It also speaks more generally, however, to the experience of immigrants and their descendants for whom a sense of belonging in a new culture often takes several generations to establish, and is exemplified, in some senses, by the lingering outsider status of Joyce's Leopold Bloom.

Participation and resistance: conclusions

Throughout the broad swathe of sources and historical periods discussed in this book, the dual factors that consistently generate an intersection of Irish migrations with classical antiquity are participation and resistance, namely an impetus to participate on the international stage and a drive to resist exclusion. Participation manifests in knowledge transfer; in migration for education; in synchronistic narratives of Irish migratory origins; in defences of Irish civilization against claims of 'barbarism'; in European debates on migratory and colonial policy; in cultural artistic exchange; in Irish-language translation; and in subscription to the first printing of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Resistance appears in rejection of disenfranchisement; in articulating the loss of dispossession and predicting restoration; in satirizing Anglo-Irish politics; in disrupting aesthetic expectations; in addressing the discrimination of exclusion as sectarian, xenophobic or gendered; in asserting the vigour of a minority language; in mining the power of pastoral; and in promoting hybridity and diversity above canonicity and hierarchy.

Notes

1. See, e.g., https://www.ireland.ie/en/japan/tokyo/news-and-events/news-archive/launch-of-diaspora-strategy-2025/#:~:text=to%20seek%20pathways%20to%20legal,emigrants%20

who%20are%20returning%20home and https://www.ireland.ie/en/global-ireland-strategies/global-ireland-irelands-global-footprint-to-2025/#:~:text=At%20a%20global%20level%2C%20it,and%20heritage%20to%20wider%20audiences. Wikipedia *s.v.* 'Irish Diaspora' gives a figure of 'up to 80 million'; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_diaspora.

2. The history of the Irish Penal Laws, their enforcement and their impact, is a complicated one. For a recent overview, with further references, see McGrath 2021.
3. Irish tradition is unusual in preserving a medieval tale *On the Third Troy*, which recounts the rebuilding of Troy after the famous sack, which is normally considered a complete annihilation (see Miles 2024). We cannot assume, however, that early modern Irish authors necessarily knew of this tradition.

PART I
MEDIEVAL IRELAND: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL MIGRATIONS AND TRANSFERS OF KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER 2
ETYMOLOGY, GRAECO-ROMAN MYTHOLOGY AND HIBERNO-LATIN SCHOLARSHIP: IRISH MIGRANT SCHOLARS IN THE PRE-CAROLINGIAN AND CAROLINGIAN PERIODS

Jason O'Rorke

Ireland and Roman education

Classical Latin literature formed the backbone of Roman education. In schools, Roman pupils, guided by their teachers, the *grammatici*, studied Virgil and other esteemed Latin authors (*auctores*; Kaster 1988). Mythology was a prominent theme in classical literature, and so Roman pupils developed intimate knowledge of this subject over the course of their education. Ireland was never part of the Roman Empire, and as such these schools were not established on its landscape. Yet, classical learning and the study of the liberal arts flourished in Ireland following the conversion of its people to Christianity in the fifth century (Herren 1981). One feature of Irish scholarship, influenced by the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, was the deployment of etymological strategies as a means of extracting additional information about Graeco-Roman mythology from texts (on the significance of Isidore for medieval Irish authors, see also Chapter 3 in this volume). The aim of this chapter will be to highlight the remarkable range of strategies used by the Irish *literati* to expose the meanings of words with mythological significance, and to reveal characteristic features about the referents. Two case studies will be presented, one on the word *centaurus*, 'centaur', from a manuscript produced in Italy, and another on the mythological figures Calypso and Themisto. Since the case studies will focus on Latin texts and manuscripts compiled on the Continent between the seventh and ninth centuries, they deal with the activities of the Irish *peregrini*. These migrant scholars received intellectual training before they left Ireland for the Continent. Therefore, it is necessary to first survey their education in Ireland, the books they read and the etymological strategies they employed so that we may acquire a better appreciation of their intellectual contributions on the Continent during the Pre-Carolingian and Carolingian periods.

Classical and Christian learning in medieval Ireland

Vivien Law (1982: 30) has remarked that 'the Irish … were in a unique position in the history of western Europe: their conversion to Christianity had forced upon them the

necessity for learning a foreign language'. Latin was the official language of Western Christianity, and hence proficiency in it was a requirement for all believers. Knowledge of the language allowed one to participate in the liturgy and rituals of the Church, and was a prerequisite for anyone intent on reading and interpreting holy scriptures. We are not entirely certain how Latin was taught in Irish monastic schools (Bisagni 2013–14: 10–16), but it is likely that teachers used Latin glossaries and colloquia to enrich the vocabulary of their pupils, as well as Latin grammars, which provided knowledge about the grammatical structure of the language and information about metrics and style (Law 1982: 30).

Many of the grammars accessible in Ireland were composed by late antique *grammatici*, and were designed to guide native Latin speakers through the intricacies of the classical idiom. As a result, they were filled with citations from pagan poets such as Virgil, Horace and Ovid (Holtz 1981: 24–36). The fact that the Irish depended so heavily on the intellectual resources of pagan antiquity was not problematic in the least. Several prominent Christian intellectuals of late antiquity had come to agree that Christians need not forsake the study of pagan literature and the arts, despite the many erroneous teachings contained therein. St Augustine believed that liberal arts education could contribute to the formation of an individual, so long as it was subordinate and propaedeutic to the pursuit of Christian wisdom. For Augustine, classical literature and the arts had no intrinsic value in and of themselves; but they were not entirely redundant because the study of them cultivated skills and knowledge relevant for biblical exegesis (Stenger 2022: 86–7). Paulinus of Nola had similar convictions about the relevance of a liberal arts education. In a letter to Jovius, he implored his addressee to use his intellectual training in rhetoric, poetry and philosophy for a higher purpose, and to become a philosopher and poet for Christ (*Carmen* 16.6-7).

The Irish were heirs to this intellectual tradition, and were receptive to the view that there was value to be derived from the literature and knowledge of ancient Greece and Rome. One of the most fascinating proponents of the study of classical learning, from the early medieval period, was the Hiberno-Latin author who referred to himself as Virgil the Grammarian (Virgilius Maro Grammaticus; not to be confused with Publius Vergilius Maro, the Roman poet commonly known as Virgil). Virgil the Grammarian was active in the seventh century and his ethnicity has been debated. It has been suggested that he was from mainland Europe (Bischoff 1988: 1–16), or perhaps Anglo-Saxon Britain (Law 1982: 42–52), but it has also been argued, persuasively in my view, that he was of Irish origin or training. Michael Herren (1979: 52–60) has marshalled a substantial range of evidence in support of this hypothesis, including his apparent knowledge of the Old Irish language, the fact that his Latin orthography tends to conform with Irish practice, and the many early references to his writings which appear in Irish authors. At the very least, his works had a significance impact on Irish writers.

Virgil the Grammarian penned two treatises, the *Epitomes* (*Epitomae*) and the *Letters* (*Epistolae*) (Herren 1979). These purport to be grammars, to the extent that they contain genuine observations about the Latin language and follow the same basic hierarchical structure adopted by late antique *grammatici* in their grammatical compositions. For example, like most late antique *grammatici*, Virgil the Grammarian analyses the smallest

elements of language first (i.e., the letter, syllable, etc.), before moving on to the parts of speech (i.e., noun, verb, etc.). However, his writings also incorporate invented material. He invents literary and grammatical authorities, for instance, to whom he assigns peculiar linguistic theories. On one occasion, an unattested and presumably fictional man named Virgil of Asia is said to have preached an otherwise unknown doctrine of twelve Latinities (*Epitomes* 240.26–242.79). The proposal may be predicated on other kinds of dialectical classification (Di Maggio 2021: 335) and may be an attempt to bring some parodic levity to the generally dry topic of grammar (Lehmann 1923). In a more serious context, as Vivien Law (1995) has demonstrated, Virgil the Grammarian coined sophisticated new terminology to clarify the distinction between the form and meaning of words and sentences.

Virgil the Grammarian has a typically conflated interest in both Christian and classical learning. In the first book of the *Epitomes*, he informs us that wisdom (*sapientia*) is constituted of heavenly (*aetrea*) and earthly (*tellea*) knowledge. The former is concerned with the laws of the Hebrews while the latter is a humbler sort relating to the study of literature and the liberal arts (*Epitomes* 104.27–105.33). He offers a more elaborate and dramatic conceptualization of wisdom in the preface to his *Letters*. There he describes a vision experienced by a prophet named Tarquinius – another of his fictitious authorities – who saw two rivers, a large one flowing from heaven made of wine and a smaller one trickling out of the earth below. When the sun rose, the terrestrial river was drawn up to the heavenly one and intermingled with it forming a single river of wine. Virgil the Grammarian interprets the vision accordingly: the rivers represent two kinds of wisdom, heavenly and earthly, and the rising sun symbolizes the resurrection of Christ (*Letters* 1.1–3.36). Di Maggio (2021: 118–26) observes that the intermingling of Christian and classical learning hinted at in this vision is a characteristic feature of Virgil the Grammarian's writings.

A further striking example appears in the twelfth book of the *Epitomes* attributed to Balapsidus, another invented pseudo-authority, who supposedly remarked: *In principio celum terramque mare omniaque astra spiritus intus fovet* (*Epitomae* 245.116-17) – 'In the beginning, the spirit intrinsically supported the heaven, the earth, the sea and all the stars.' Scholars have shown that this quotation creatively combines vocabulary from Genesis 1.1 (*In principio creavit Deus cælum et terram*; 'In the beginning God created the heaven and earth') with language from the Roman poet Virgil's *Aeneid* 6.724-6 (*Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentis* / . . . Titaniaque astra / spiritus intus alit; 'In the first place, a spirit intrinsically sustains the sky, the lands, the flowing fields, . . . and the Titanian stars'; see further Di Maggio 2021: 126). Later in the same book, Virgil the Grammarian refers to a man named Maro, who lived around the time of the Flood (*Epitomae* 245.121-6). In this case, the author invented a figure with a classical name and inserted him into the world of biblical antiquity. Evidently, he was interested both in classical learning and in playfully reimagining Graeco-Roman material. We will return to this subject shortly.

Virgil the Grammarian was not the only Hiberno-Latin author who expressed an appreciation for classical learning. The anonymous Hiberno-Latin compiler of a commentary on Donatus' *Ars maior* ('The larger Grammar'), referred to as the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* ('The Anonymous Commentary Addressed to Cuimnanus'), which was

composed in the monastery Bobbio in the north of Italy in the middle of the eighth century, identified Virgil (i.e., the Roman poet) as the benchmark against which good Latinity was measured (*Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* 1.28-30). It is a curious fact that neither Virgil the Grammarian nor the compiler of the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* – so far as we know – read the *Aeneid*, the *Georgics* or the *Eclogues*, nor indeed any other works of classical Latin literature outside of small fragments cited in intermediary texts. The question is, were these writers the norm or the exception? Was classical Latin literature studied in early medieval Ireland on its own terms?

Classical literature in early medieval Ireland

The questions posed above have been the subject of debate for over a century. Up until relatively recently, it was a commonly held view that the medieval Irish *literati* almost single-handedly preserved classical literature during the so-called Dark Ages and mediated it back to the Continent in the ninth century (Bieler 1971: 45–50). This interpretation, however, has been criticized for several reasons. Firstly, as Ralph O'Connor (2014: 1–3) has pointed out, it is far too 'simple' and 'chauvinistic', as it disregards the contributions made by those in Britain and on mainland Europe, who participated in the preservation and dissemination of classical culture. For example, it discounts the intellectual activities of Anglo-Saxon scholars like Aldhelm and Bede, whose knowledge of the classics compares favourably with that of their Irish contemporaries (Orchard 1994; Wright 1981–2). What is more, it overlooks the fact that the poetry of Virgil was studied continuously throughout the seventh century in Merovingian Francia (Riché 1976: 199–201).

The second reason to question the 'Ireland saved classical literature' proposal is the fact that the evidence adduced in support of it is far too limited. Significantly, there are no manuscripts containing classical literature surviving from medieval Ireland. Indeed, the earliest Irish manuscript incorporating such works is Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 363 compiled by an Irish *peregrinus* on the Continent in the third quarter of the ninth century (Contreni 1982: 2.758–98). Of course, absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence. Manuscripts including such works may have existed but did not come down to us from that period. Therefore, we should be wary of adopting an overly pessimistic view of the state of classical learning among the early Irish, especially since there is evidence indicating that classical literature was studied in certain monastic centres. For example, one collection of Hiberno-Latin texts known as the *Hisperica Famina* (Western Orations) appears to have been influenced by the works of the Roman poet Virgil. Scholars generally date the texts to the seventh century, and some believe that they constituted school textbooks on the subject of rhetoric and composition (Herren 1974). Indeed, several studies have focused on the extraordinary language of these texts, in particular their tendency to use Latin neologisms formed from Greek, Hebrew and Celtic roots, as well as learned vocabulary derived from the works of the poet Virgil (Orchard 2000). Evidence for the study of the Roman poet Virgil can also be detected in the manuscript St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 904, composed in Ireland during the second half of the ninth century

(Hofman 1996: 1.12–31). The manuscript preserves an almost complete copy of the *Institutiones grammaticae* ('Institutes of Grammar'), an eighteen-volume handbook of Latin grammar, by the sixth-century grammarian Priscian. It is glossed with over 9,000 marginal notes in both Latin and Old Irish, some of which concern verses of Virgil cited in the grammar. Brian Ó Cuív (1981) and Rijcklof Hofman (1988) have demonstrated that the glossators knew more about the contents of Virgil's poetry than what could be gleaned from simply reading Priscian or other commentators on the poet in circulation at that time, signalling that the glossators probably had first-hand experience with his writings. Apart from Virgil, there is also evidence for knowledge of the Roman poet Statius' epic *Thebaid* in a ninth-century recension of the *Audacht Morainn* ('The Testament of Morann'), a gnomic text featuring the legendary judge Morann advising a young king (Bisagni 2015). There are further indications, as well, that some of the authors of *Hisperica Famina* studied parts of Pliny's *Natural History* (Corrigan 2013–14).

The mediation of classical learning through late antique literature

Classical Latin literature was not the only way that classical learning was accessed; it was also transmitted through late antique texts, and these circulated widely in early medieval Ireland. We have already mentioned that the Irish had access to grammars which were repositories of information about classical Latin poetry. The most commonly read grammars in medieval Ireland were the *Ars minor* ('The smaller Grammar') and *Ars maior* ('The larger Grammar') by the fourth-century grammarian Aelius Donatus, followed closely by those of Priscian, whose grammatical works became increasingly popular over the course of the ninth century (Holtz 1981: 264–326; Law 1982: 14–16, 20–2).

Commentaries on Virgil also passed through Irish hands during the early medieval period. One such commentary available to the Irish was composed by the grammarian Servius, who was active in Rome in the early fifth century. His commentary covered all three of Virgil's works: the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*. Perhaps in the seventh century, although this is disputed, a scholar added material to Servius' commentary, and this new compilation also circulated in Irish intellectual circles. This interpolated version of the commentary is often attributed to Servius Auctus. Finally, we know that certain Irish scholars had access to a commentary on Virgil's *Eclogues* by Philargirius, an obscure figure who may have lived in the fifth century. His commentary survives in two forms, a longer version and a shorter one, and material from both appears to have been incorporated into two later medieval compilations known as the *Scholia Bernensia* ('Bern Scholia'), which concern the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*, and the *Brevis Expositio Georgicorum* ('The Short Explanation of the Georgics'). The presence of Old Irish glosses on manuscripts of Servius, Servius Auctus and Philargirius is incontrovertible evidence that the commentaries were studied by Irish scholars; certainly on the Continent, where the manuscripts are found. It remains uncertain whether such texts were widely used in Ireland (see Miles 2011: 23–33 for a lucid summary of the scholarship on this complicated subject).

Encyclopaedic texts were also fundamental sources of knowledge for Irish scholars. The most influential and widely accessible of these was undoubtedly the *Etymologies* by Isidore of Seville, which was published in the year 636 and arrived in Ireland rather quickly after that, possibly around 650 (Hillgarth 1984; Ryan 2019). The *Etymologies* consists of twenty books covering a broad range of subjects, and offering a synthesis of classical and Christian learning. Less influential, but still a basic source of information, was the *Saturnalia* by the fifth-century intellectual Macrobius, a work in which intellectuals at a fictional banquet discuss various topics. This text circulated in Ireland from about the seventh century onwards in an abridged form called the *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati* ('The Dialogue between Horus1 and Praetextatus'). It was valued most of all by computists, who benefited from its treatment of the Roman calendar (Holford-Strevens 2019).

Finally, Patristic literature also mediated knowledge about the classical tradition. The works of Augustine, Jerome and others were studied in Ireland, and often contained citations from classical literature as well as commentary on those citations. Other Patristic texts were sources of specialized knowledge which the Irish held in high regard. For example, the *History against the Pagans* by the fifth-century author Orosius was commonly read in Irish intellectual circles, in part because it included geographical and historical knowledge derived from classical sources (Herren 1981: 138–40).

The study of etymology in antiquity and the Middle Ages

The Irish *literati* – and medieval scholars more generally – were not satisfied with simply recording ancient knowledge handed down in these texts. They endeavoured to derive additional knowledge about the classical tradition from texts by subjecting relevant words to etymological analysis. They acquired a great deal of their knowledge about the science of etymology from the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville. He defined it as an inquiry into the 'origin of words', and stated that it was crucial because this 'knowledge often has an indispensable usefulness for interpreting a word, for when you have seen whence a word has originated, you understand its force more quickly' (*Etymologies* 1.29.1-2; trans. Barney et al. 2006: 54–5, adapted slightly). For Isidore, etymological relationships could be established when there were formal and, to a lesser extent, semantic equivalences between words: thus, *terra*, 'earth', comes from *teritur*, 'is trod upon' (14.1.1); *homo*, 'man', from *humus*, 'soil' (1.29.3); *anus*, 'old woman', from *annus*, 'year' (11.2.28); and *auctor*, 'author', from *augere*, 'to increase' (10.a.2). The etymologies of certain other words were more complex: *honorabilis*, 'honourable', for example, comes from *honore habilis*, 'suitable for honours' (10.h.115), and *amicus*, 'friend', from *animi custos*, 'guardian of the spirit' (10.a.4). Here, the nouns *amicus* and *honorabilis* were analysed as though they were originally compound forms each consisting of two meaningful elements.

Isidore's etymological approach was informed by Graeco-Roman linguistic theories. In a Latin context, the theories are first attested in *De Lingua Latina* ('On the Latin Language') by the first-century BCE author Marcus Terentius Varro. He tells us that

words change, and that over time letters and syllables are added to words or subtracted from them, causing their meanings to become obscure (*De Lingua Latina* 5.3). The role of the etymologist is to recognize when such changes have occurred, and to restore words to their original forms by undoing the changes brought on by the passing of time so that the original meanings are evident (*De Lingua Latina* 6.2, 7.1). Quintilian, writing in the first century CE, also discussed etymological strategies in his *Institutio Oratoria* ('Institutes of Oratory'), although he was sceptical of their overall value, and argued that they should only be used in doubtful cases (*Institutio Oratoria* 1.6.38). Like Varro, he identified various ways that etymologists restore words to their original forms, by lengthening or shortening the quantity of vowels, or by adding, subtracting and interchanging letters and syllables (*Institutio Oratoria* 1.6.32). We can detect the influence of these ideas on Isidore's etymologies cited above: *amicus* from *animi custos* involves the addition of syllables; *anus* from *annus* requires the deletion of the letter *n*; and *auctor* from *augere* involves, among other changes, the substitution of the letter *c* for *g*.

The study of etymology in early medieval Ireland

The impact of Isidore's *Etymologies* on medieval Irish scholarship cannot be overstated. Isidore taught the Irish *literati* how to do etymological analysis by providing them with a model to imitate (Baumgarten 1983; Russell 2008). We will clearly see his influence on Irish etymological practice in some examples presented below but, before we do, a few general remarks about the linguistic situation in medieval Ireland are required.

In addition to Irish, three other languages were revered in medieval Ireland – Latin, Greek and Hebrew. These languages gained special status as the *tres linguae sacrae*, 'three sacred languages', so called because they were inscribed on Christ's cross (McNally 1958). Of these three languages, only Latin was mastered by the majority of the educated class. Very few had Greek, and even fewer knew any Hebrew outside of lists of words and grammatical paradigms obtained from late antique grammars, glossaries and theological and exegetical tracts, such as the *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum* ('The Book on the Interpretation of Hebrew Names') by St Jerome (Moran 2010; Moran 2012). Nevertheless, Irish etymologists exploited all the knowledge and resources at their disposal to investigate if there were etymological connections between Irish, Latin, Greek and Hebrew words.

Below, I have cited four representative etymologies of Irish words excerpted from *De Origine Scoticae Linguae* ('On the Origin of the Irish Language'), otherwise known as O'Mulconry's Glossary (OM), an Irish-language glossary dated to the late seventh or early eighth century (Moran 2019).

> Abardall .i. abditum 7 dall.
>
> *Abardall* 'deepest dark', i.e. [Lat.] *abditum* 'hidden' and [Irish] *dall* 'blind, dark'.
>
> *OM 7; trans. Moran 2019: 128*

All 7 alt ab altitudine.

All 'cliff' and *alt* 'height, cliff', from [Lat.] *altitudo* 'height'

OM 36; trans. Moran 2019: 131

Cend *a uerbo Greco* .i. *gennome* .i. *nascor*, ar is ball ceta·geinither, *quia foetus a capite sumit exordium, unde et in auium foetu primum oculos fingi in ouis uidemus*.

Cenn 'head', from the Greek verb *gennome* [γεννῶμαι], i.e. I am born, for it is the limb which is born first, because a foetus takes its beginning from the head, hence also in the foetus of birds we see firstly the eyes formed in the eggs.

OM 217; trans. Moran 2019: 154

Samhrad .i. focul comsuidig[th]e ó ebra 7 ó scotic, samh ebraice, solis latine 7 ríadh .i. rith; samhrad didiu rith solis.

Samrad 'summer', i.e. a word compounded from Hebrew and from Irish; *sam* in Hebrew, *solis* 'of the sun' in Latin, and *ríad* 'course' in Irish, i.e. run; *samrad*, then, means the sun's run [< Heb. sam 'sun' + ríad 'course'].

OM, 860; trans. Moran 2019: 243

These examples are good illustrations of how etymological analysis was carried out in medieval Ireland. As we can see, Isidore of Seville's influence is clearly on display, and there is an obvious fascination with the *linguae sacrae*: the derivation of *cenn* from the Greek verb *gennome* (γεννῶμαι) involves the loss of syllables and the substitution of the letter *g* for *c*; the derivation of the words *all* and *alt* from the Latin word *altitudo* requires the loss of syllables; *abardall* is analysed as though it is a compound form comprising a Latin element, *abditum*, and an Irish one, *dall*; and *samhrad* is explicitly identified as a compound formed from the Hebrew word *sam* and an Irish one, *ríad*.

Etymologies resembling those of Isidore are also prevalent in the Hiberno-Latin writings of Virgil the Grammarian. Examples include: *avis de aviditate carpendi dicenda est* (*Epitomae* 229.67), 'the bird takes its name from its greed in grasping'; *Caput a capacitate sumendi dictum est* (*Epitomae* 230.87), 'the head is so called from its ability to understand'; *Lingua a linguendo dicitur* (*Epitomae* 232.110), 'the tongue is so called from licking'; and *labia ex labore loquendi dicta intelleguntur* (*Epitomae* 233.129), 'It is believed that the lips are so called from the labour of speaking.' One of the more interesting examples, however, is the following: *Belua marina erit; bel enim a philosophis mare vocatur* (*Epitomae* 230.77-8), '*Belua* [whale] is a sea creature, since philosophers call the sea *bel*.' Michael Herren (1979: 53) noted that '*bel* is the Old Irish word for mouth, but its metaphorical use to mean "opening" or "aperture" in respect of the sea is attested'. For this reason, he suggested that the analysis here may rely on Old Irish wordplay. If the argument carries substance, then cross-linguistic etymological speculation was a concern of Virgil the Grammarian.

Case study 1: *Centaurus* and the Irish in Italy

Having traced the development of interlingual etymologizing in medieval Irish scholarship, we now turn our attention to our first case study regarding the etymology of *centaurus* preserved in the *Ars Ambrosiana*, drawing on my previously published work (O'Rorke 2020). The *Ambrosiana* is an anonymous commentary on Donatus' *Ars maior* ('The larger Grammar'). There is a single surviving manuscript of the commentary, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS L 22 sup., which appears to have been produced in the monastic *scriptorium* of Bobbio, in Italy, in the third quarter of the ninth century (Löfstedt 1982: vii). The commentary itself shows signs that it too was a product of that *scriptorium*. Indeed, almost all the sources utilized by its compiler are transmitted in manuscripts with a Bobbio provenance or are documented in Bobbio's tenth-century library catalogue (Löfstedt 1982: vii; Law 1982: 93–7).

The monastery of Bobbio was an important intellectual centre located in the north of Italy. As discussed by Mary McAleese in the Foreword to this volume, it was founded by the Irish missionary Columbanus in the second decade of the seventh century. Housing a community of Irish, Gauls and Lombards, the Irish inhabitants were, in fact, in the minority. They left their mark, however, on the monastic library and its *scriptorium*, producing many books written in Irish script, with characteristic Irish abbreviations and glossed with material in the Old Irish language (Richter 2008). These books were studied by the entire community at Bobbio, including the Gauls and Lombards, although the latter must have found the Irish material especially challenging and certainly confusing, since it is very unlikely that any of them learned the language.

This brings us to the question of authorship of the *Ambrosiana*, which is subject to debate. The commentary displays clear signs of Irish influence and perhaps even Irish authorship. There are two embedded Old Irish glosses, one of which can be dated before the year 700 on linguistic grounds (Löfstedt 1982: xvii), as well as an etymology of *centaurus*, 'centaur', involving Old Irish wordplay (O'Rorke 2020: 67–78); there are several words with characteristic Hiberno-Latin spellings (Löfstedt 1982: viii); and errors occur in the manuscript indicating the existence of an insular exemplar (O'Rorke 2020: 75–6). Vivien Law (1982: 93–4, 97) pointed out that this sort of material can creep into texts over the course of transmission, and cautioned that it does not necessarily prove Irish authorship. She endorsed two alternative readings of the evidence: either the compiler, who she supposed was from the Continent, had access to a Hiberno-Latin source and copied the Old Irish material from it even though he did not understand it; or Irish scribes were involved in the transmission of the text and added the material as they were making copies of it. Recently, I have identified new evidence in support of the view that the compiler was from the Continent and used a Hiberno-Latin source (2020: 73–5). We will review the evidence shortly, given that it involves the analysis of the word *centaurus*, 'centaur', but, for the moment, I will proceed on the premise of this interpretation.

There has been further disagreement regarding the date of the commentary. It is assigned a *terminus post quem* of 636 on the grounds that the compiler read Isidore's *Etymologies*, and therefore the text must post-date this. If the compiler was Irish, the

terminus ante quem of the commentary is 700 and is established on the basis of the Old Irish gloss mentioned above, which exhibits linguistic and orthographical features consistent with the Irish language of the seventh century (Holtz 1981: 271; Löfstedt 1982: vii). However, my view that the compiler was from the Continent, and copied a Hiberno-Latin source, means that the gloss cannot be used as evidence for dating the text. Instead, the *terminus ante quem* is ascribed on the basis of the manuscript, which is dated to the end of the ninth century.

There are indications that the composition date can be placed at the earlier end of the temporal limits proposed here, possibly towards the end of the seventh century or at the beginning of the eighth. The *Ambrosiana* is related to two Hiberno-Latin grammars composed at Bobbio, namely the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* ('Anonymous Commentary addressed to Cuimnanus') and the *Ars Bernensis* ('The Bern Grammar'), dated no later than the middle of the eighth century and the beginning of the ninth century respectively.[2] The compilers of the *Anonymus* and *Bernensis* relied on a richer array of sources than the compiler of the *Ambrosiana*, which might suggest that the latter penned his commentary earlier than the other two, when the library's resources were more limited. Admittedly, this argument is speculative, and therefore we cannot rule out the possibility that the commentary was composed later during the Carolingian period.

The *Ambrosiana* is a lemmatized commentary, where the compiler presents quotations from the text of Donatus and then comments on them. On one occasion, the compiler comments on the phrase *centaurus navis* 'The ship [named] centaur' used by Donatus to clarify an observation about grammatical gender (*Ars maior* 620.2; ed. Holtz 1981).[3] There is no doubt that Donatus was referring to the ship *centaurus* mentioned in the Roman poet Virgil's *Aeneid* (5.120-220), which participated in a race as part of the funeral games of Aeneas' father Anchises. The compiler was either completely ignorant of this part of the narrative, or he elected not to document it and instead produced the most remarkable interpretation.

> *Centaurus, ut aiunt, nomen viri est, a quo navis appellata est. Aliter: Centaurus conpositum, hoc est caput tauri. Et per metaforam navi hoc nomen inpositum est per similitudinem non propriam rostri pro latitudine; navis enim, quae Centaurus dicta, formam capitis tauri habuit.*
>
> Ars Ambrosiana *42.143-7*

> *Centaurus*, as some say, is the name of a man after whom a ship was named. Alternatively, *Centaurus* is a compound, that is a *caput tauri* 'head of a bull'. This name was given to the ship metaphorically through a comparison that does not relate to the size of the ship's prow. For the ship which was called *Centaurus* had the form of a bull's head.
>
> *trans. O'Rorke 2020: 73, slightly adapted*

As we can see, the account of the ship in the *Aeneid* is not documented here, nor is the word *centaurus* ascribed its standard meaning, that is, a creature made of human and

horse parts. We are informed that it refers to a man after whom a ship was named. We are also told that there is an alternative interpretation, which is that *centaurus* is a compound word meaning *caput tauri*, 'bull's head', since the ship had the form of a bull's head. This passage can be explained if we assume that the etymology of *centaurus* involves Latin and Old Irish wordplay. This is a reasonable assumption since we know that the Irish *literati* had a penchant for such etymological word games and because the commentary itself exhibits Irish influence. With that in mind, it appears that the noun has been reimagined as a compound formed from two parts: *cen*[*n*], the Old Irish word for 'head', which of course looks like the relevant part of the compound and shares its meaning (i.e., *caput*), and the Latin word *taurus*, 'bull'. This etymology closely resembles the analysis of the Old Irish words *abardall*, 'deepest dark', and *samrad*, 'summer', discussed above, which are presented as compounds from Old Irish and one of the sacred languages.

The compiler offers an explanation for the etymology, but it includes a misinterpretation indicating a lack of familiarity with Old Irish:

> *Plerique mirantur nomen quod est caput in tantum corruptum esse, ut nihil remanserit nisi c in conpositione; non minus mirentur nihil remansisse in nomine tibicen a verbo cano nisi c.*
>
> Ars Ambrosiana *42.149-52*

> Many are astonished that the noun *caput* 'head' is so corrupted that nothing has survived in the compound formation except for the letter *c*. Just as they are as astonished that nothing has survived from the verb *cano* 'I sing' in the noun *tibicen* 'flautist' except for *c*.
>
> *trans. O'Rorke 2020: 74–5*

As we can see, the compiler is unable to identify '*cen*' as the Old Irish word for 'head' and instead suggests that *cen* is a corrupt form of *caput*, where only the letter c has survived. His argument seems to be that there once was a word *caput-taurus*, which no longer exists as a consequence of linguistic corruption. He provides justification for his analysis by drawing a comparison between *centaurus* and the word *tibicen*, 'flautist', which he regards as a corrupt, compound form. The word is derived in part from the verb *cano*, 'I sing', although he argues that this etymological relationship has been obscured due to the loss of letters.

This example highlights how Old Irish, through migrant Irish scholars, became embedded in Continental scholarship on classical languages, and we turn now to our second case study before drawing further conclusions on the significance and impact of the work of these classically-trained Irish migrant scholars or *peregrini*.

Case study 2: Calypso and Themisto as islands and the Irish *peregrini*

Aside from linguistic issues, there are a number of other unusual interpretations of Graeco-Roman literary and mythographic material in the *Ambrosiana*. We are told, for

instance, that *Eunuchus* ('The Eunuch'), a comedy by the well-known second-century BCE Roman playwright Terence, is not the title of a comedy but the name of an individual who sang about comedy (*Ars Ambrosiana* 42.130-1). *Orestes*, a drama by the famous fifth-century BCE tragedian Euripides, is not the title of a tragedy but the name of a man who sang about tragedy (42.138). Castor and Pollux, the twin brothers of Helen (of Troy), were women (137.323). The nouns Calypso and Themisto refer to islands and not nymphs (17.205). It is worth mentioning that there are remarkably similar explanations for *Eunuchus*, *Orestes* and Castor and Pollux in the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* (48.130-6; 139.79-80). The so-called *Leyden glossary* compiled at the school of Canterbury around the year 700 similarly records that Calypso and Themisto are islands (43.1-2; Lapidge 2015: 624–55). This suggests that the collection of mythological material had strong associations with insular intellectual circles.

Louis Holtz (1981: 287–8) argued that the explanations were signs of cultural decadence, demonstrating that knowledge almost universally known among Roman schoolchildren was sometimes unfamiliar to well-educated medieval scholars. Ignorance of classical culture may account for this material, but Michael Herren (1998: 100) proposed an alternative reading, suggesting that at least some of this material may represent euhemeristic reinterpretations of traditional Graeco-Roman mythology. Euhemerism, named after the fourth century BCE Greek mythographer Euhemerus, is a mode of interpretation which takes for granted that mythological figures were originally historical individuals, or that mythological narratives were inspired by true, historical events. This way of interpreting was embraced by Christian intellectuals of late antiquity because it provided them with a means of challenging beliefs in pagan deities since, according to euhemeristic explanations, deities were merely deified mortal men.

The interpretation of Calypso as an island seems to have made its first appearance in the *History against the Pagans* by Orosius. The first book offers a geographical description of the entire world and mentions the island of Calypso while describing the continent of Africa. The relevant passage is as follows:

> *Huic est ab oriente Aegyptus, a septentrione mare Libycum, ab occasu Syrtes maiores et Trogodytae contra quos insula Calypso est, a meridie Aethiopicus oceanus.*
>
> Egypt is on the east of this region, the Libyan Sea on the north, the Greater Syrtis and the land of the Troglodytes on the west, opposite which is the island Calypso, and on the south is the Ethiopian Ocean.
>
> History against the Pagans *1.2.89; trans. Deferrari 1964: 17*

The nouns Calypso and *insula*, 'island', are in apposition. Hence, Calypso cannot refer to the nymph who had a protracted love affair with Odysseus on the island of Ogygia; rather, Calypso in this passage is the name of the island itself. Orosius' interpretation influenced at least one Carolingian mapmaker who represented the island Calypso on his *mappa mundi*, 'map of the world' (see Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 6018, ff.63v–64r.). By contrast, the island Themisto is not included in any

extant map or geographical tract, so far as I know. The question is, then, how did the name Themisto also acquire the meaning of an island?

This interpretation of Themisto may have arisen as a result of an ambiguously placed interlinear gloss in a manuscript of Donatus. Calypso and Themisto are juxtaposed in Donatus' *Ars maior* ('The larger Grammar') and are employed as examples of Latin words which preserve the original Greek declension (*Ars maior* 615.7; ed. Holtz 1981). It is possible that a scholar, who was familiar with the passage in Orosius, placed an explanatory gloss *insula*, 'island', above Calypso in a manuscript of the *Ars maior*. Thereafter, another scholar perhaps studied this manuscript and assumed that the gloss was explaining both Calypso and Themisto. The scholar may have then copied this explanation of Themisto into a text, thereby creating an entirely new interpretation of the word.

Interpretations of Calypso and Themisto were sources of fascination for several ninth-century Irish *peregrini*. Two Irish *peregrini*, in fact, recorded interpretations of these words in commentaries on the *Ars maior* of Donatus. Sedulius Scottus is undoubtedly the most famous of the two figures. He was active at the Irish cathedral school at Laon and produced many works on a range of subjects (including poetry, biblical exegesis, grammar, philosophy, politics and leadership). Murethach, the other Irish *peregrinus*, is not as well known, but was a resident of Auxerre and a contemporary of the influential biblical exegete Haimo. Louis Holtz (1972: 45–73) has studied the commentaries of Sedulius and Murethach in detail, revealing them to be very similar. In fact, the commentaries frequently repeat the same information verbatim. For this reason, Holtz concluded that the scholars may have consulted the same commentary on Donatus and derived similar explanations from it. That said, it is interesting to note that Murethach and Sedulius offer remarkably different interpretations of Themisto and Calypso. Murethach believed that both words simply refer to nymphs (*In Donati Artem Maiorem*, 'On the Larger Grammar of Donatus' 62.90-1). By contrast, Sedulius' explanations of the words are as follows:

> *Themisto dicitur vel insula, ubi abundat vinum – quia temetum dicitur vinum – vel mulier vendens vinum. Calipso vel nomen est nymphae vel insula, ubi abundat ferrum, nam chalybs dicitur ferrum. Chalybes enim sunt populi, apud quos abundat optimum ferrum, sicut quodam loco legitur: Quicquid Chalybis gestabant, forinsecus posuerunt. Et nympha dicitiur dea aquarum.*
>
> Themisto is said to be an island where wine abounds – because the word temetum is used for vinum [wine] – or a woman who sells wine. Calypso is the name of a nymph or an island where iron abounds: for the word chalybs is used for ferrum [iron]. Indeed, the Chalybes are a people among whom the finest iron abounds, for it is written in a certain passage: 'They erected publicly everything they owned [made] of iron.' The nymph is also said to be a goddess of the waters.
>
> *Sedulius Scottus,* In Donati Artem Maiorem, '*On the Larger Grammar of Donatus', 81.68-74, ed. B. Löfstedt 1977; trans. my own*

This passage mainly presents euhemeristic reinterpretations of Graeco-Roman mythology. We are told that Themisto is either an island saturated with wine or is a female wine vendor, and that Calypso designates an island teeming with iron. These interpretations are quite similar to the ones already discussed above, insofar as the words Themisto and Calypso are associated with islands. However, Sedulius incorporates additional information relating to specific features of these islands. Where did he acquire this extra information?

Before I address this question, it is necessary to discuss two words occurring in the passage: *temetum*, 'wine', and *chalybs*, 'iron'. In fact, '*temetum*' is an archaic Latin word. Pliny the Elder tells us that the author Cato the Elder (234–149 BCE) used this word instead of *vinum* to mean 'wine' (*Natural History* 14.89). Chalybs, by contrast, is a borrowing from Greek (χάλυψ = *chalyps*). The Chalybes were a people documented in Greek and Roman literature from about the fifth century BCE onwards. Ancient writers were of the view that they were either the inventors of iron or a people with access to great quantities of the metal and, as a result, their name became synonymous with it (Bittarello 2016: 497–534). Sedulius' knowledge of the word chalybs as well as the people, the Chalybes, appears to be ultimately derived from the commentary attributed to Servius Auctus. On one occasion, the commentary states: *Chalybes autem proprie populi sunt, apud quos nascitur ferrum*, 'The Chalybes are rightly a people, among whom iron is produced' (*in Vergilii carmina commentarii: Aeneidos librorvm VI–XII commentarii*, On the commentaries on Virgil's poetry: commentaries on the books of the Aeneid 6–12, vol. 2: 263, 4–5).

Sedulius, then, used his knowledge of this learned vocabulary in a rather remarkable way. He observed that there were formal similarities between Themisto and *temetum*, 'wine', on the one hand, and Calypso and *chalybs*, 'iron', on the other and concluded that the pairs of words were etymologically related. Subsequently, he infers certain characteristic features of the islands and the woman (in the case of Themisto), pursuant to information derived from the etymological analysis.

A similar interpretation of the noun Calypso is also found in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 14429, compiled on the Continent during the ninth century. This is a large composite manuscript, the majority of which was written by a single Irish *peregrinus* in Irish script. The remaining parts of the manuscript were produced by several different Carolingian scribes. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (2002a) argued that material in this manuscript may have originated in the intellectual circle of the *peregrinus* Iohannes Scottus Eriugena. There is an Old Irish gloss (Ó Cróinín 2002b) and more than seventy occurrences in the margins of the manuscript of the abbreviation *Ioh*, for Iohannes, typically employed to make attributions to this Irish scholar (Ó Cróinín 2002: 249). The manuscript also contains a series of glosses edited by Ó Cróinín on the subject of Odysseus and his wanderings, and two of them concern Calypso: *Kalipso .i. obscura. Kalipso autem .i. ferrea* (2002a: 246); 'Calypso, that is something concealed. Moreover, Calypso, that is something relating to iron.' The first explanation appears to be an attempt to capture the sense of the ancient Greek etymology of the word in Latin (i.e., καλυψώ = *kalypsô* from καλύπτω = *kalyptô*, 'I conceal'). The second, associates Calypso with the classical Greek word for iron similarly evoked by Sedulius (i.e. χάλυψ = *chalyps*, 'iron').

Classical learning in Ireland and Irish migrant scholars: conclusions

This chapter has discussed classical learning in early medieval Ireland, and has examined the Irish creative engagement with multilingual etymologizing and with Graeco-Roman mythological material on the Continent during the Pre-Carolingian and Carolingian periods. It posits that Irish migrant scholars in the medieval period invented new terminology through etymologies of Graeco-Roman terms inflected with Old Irish meaning, or through erudite classical learning. The meaning of the word *centaurus*, 'centaur', and the identification of the mythological figures Calypso and Themisto as islands related to iron and wine, respectively, demonstrate how the Irish *peregrini* entirely reimagined significant figures from classical Graeco-Roman mythology in ways that made etymological sense. The etymological strategies employed by Irish migrant scholars were, in turn, deeply influenced by classically-derived late antique theories of etymology, most importantly those of Isidore of Seville, whose work circulated widely in early medieval Ireland and was indebted to Roman authors such as Varro and Quintilian.

While the Irish *peregrini* were cognisant of these ancient linguistic ideas, they did not implement the rules and strategies of etymology as strictly as their Roman forbears. One of the most substantial differences between the Roman approach and that of the medieval Irish was that the latter appear to have been primarily concerned with the form of words when engaged in etymological analysis, and less interested in semantic criteria. This enabled them to posit the most extreme etymological links between words which no Roman would presumably have made. The relationship between Calypso, on the one hand, and *chalybs*, 'iron', on the other, is a clear example of this. A Roman might have noticed that the words look like each other in some respects, but would not have assumed an etymological connection on that basis, given that the meanings of the words and the things to which they refer are completely incompatible.

The Irish reliance on formal criteria also encouraged etymological wordplay between their own vernacular and the *tres linguae sacrae*, 'three sacred languages' (Latin, Greek and Hebrew). We observed that an Irish scholar invented the most unusual interpretation of *centaurus*, 'centaur', by analysing the word as though it was a compound made up of an Irish language element and a Latin one (Old Irish, *cen*[*n*], 'head' + Latin, *taurus*, 'head'). We traced the origins of this practice back to medieval Ireland where etymologists endeavoured to identify the roots of certain Irish words in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages.

The analysis of *centaurus* also gave us an opportunity to explore one of the challenges faced by mainland Europeans when they encountered Irish learning. Throughout the early Middle Ages, Irish scholars migrated to the Continent with their books and shared their knowledge with the monastic communities they joined. Some of the knowledge was conveyed in Irish, or depended on wordplay involving the Irish language. Scholars from mainland Europe preserved this vernacular material in manuscripts, despite the fact that they were presumably or demonstrably unable to understand it, as in the case of the compiler of the *Ambrosiana* we discussed.

These case studies on the minutiae and impact of etymologies have, in turn, been set within the broader context of Irish migrant scholars and the transfer or development of knowledge. We have observed how classical learning was mediated to Ireland following the conversion of its people to Christianity, how scholars in Ireland studied Graeco-Roman mythology in monastic settings, and how they exploited strategies of etymologizing and of euhemerism favoured by Christian intellectuals of late antiquity. In these monastic settings, the meanings of mythological names like *centaurus*, Calypso and Themisto could be utterly transformed, and Irish *peregrini* such as Sedulius Scottus, Murethach, Iohannes Scottus Eriugena and other figures, whose names are lost to history, transmitted this new knowledge back to the Continent. Thus, the case studies presented here concern the Irish intellectual contribution to Europe, and represent a small part of a much wider picture of migration of knowledge and migration of scholars between Ireland and the Continent during the Pre-Carolingian and Carolingian periods.

Notes

1. *Chorus* is a medieval corruption of the original form *Horus*.
2. On the date and localization of the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum*, see Bischoff and Löfstedt 1992: vii–xxiii. On the date and localization of the *Ars Bernensis*, see Holtz 1995: 111–26. On the relationship between these grammars and the *Ambrosiana*, see Holtz 1981: 284–94; and O'Rorke 2020: 82–3.
3. My analysis here follows O'Rorke 2020: 73–5.

CHAPTER 3
NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION AS ORIGIN STORIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *LEBOR GABÁLA ÉRENN*, 'THE BOOK OF INVASIONS OF IRELAND', AND LATE ANTIQUE HISTORIOGRAPHY

Pau Blanco Ríos

The arrival of Christianity in the fifth century brought Latin writing to Ireland (see further O'Rorke, Chapter 2, this volume). Along with it came a Christian view of history, shaped by the combined legacies of biblical history, the classical period and late antiquity. As demonstrated in the recent volume *Classical Antiquity and Medieval Ireland*, the biblical, classical and late antique were entirely enmeshed in medieval Irish literature (Clarke, Poppe and Torrance 2024). A Christian image of a shared past would eventually emerge that brought together secular and religious history across the old Roman Empire and beyond. The Irish only encountered this universal Christian history after their conversion, at which point they started to consider their own place within it. *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel?* ('Whence the origins of the Gaels?') is the title of a ninth-century historical poem (Ritari 2017, ed. Todd 1848: 220–71), as well as an open question with which medieval Irish historians actively engaged. As the seventh-century bishop Isidore of Seville had shown, knowledge of one's origins equates to knowledge of oneself (Amsler 1989: 134) and, in the case of history, of one's place in the world and within the wider scheme of salvation history. Though many medieval Irish texts respond to Isidore's emphasis on origins as a central aspect of a people's history, *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, 'The Book of Invasions of Ireland', is perhaps the most extensive and influential example of an attempt to conceptualize a common past for the Irish. In this chapter, I shall explore how it addresses the origins of the Irish by presenting a narrative of migration from the East that synthesizes Irish scholars' knowledge of the biblical and classical past.

Lebor Gabála Érenn and its context: constructing universal medieval history

Lebor Gabála Érenn (which literally translates as 'The Book of the Taking(s) of Ireland', though it is more commonly known as 'The Book of Invasions') is a historiographical text dated to the eleventh century (Carey 2005: 44). It claims to give an account of the origins of the Gaels from Creation to their arrival in Ireland, as well as of the invasions of the island that preceded them. 'Gaels', or in its Irish spelling 'Gaídil' (singular form,

Gáedel), was one of the names the medieval Irish used to refer to themselves (which also included the Latin 'Scotti'; see Johnston 2013: 85–9).[1] As is often the case with medieval Irish texts, it survives only in later manuscripts, the earliest being the twelfth-century *Book of Leinster* (Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1339), though recent scholarship argues for the existence of an earlier copy of the text, now lost, at the beginning of the late eleventh-century manuscript *Lebor na hUidre*, 'The Book of the Dun Cow' (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 E 25; Carey 2009). Internal references within the text also point to the existence of another copy in a now lost manuscript, *Cín Dromma Snechtai* ('The Book of Drumsnat'), variously dated from the eighth to the tenth century (Scowcroft 1988: 9).

Lebor Gabála is a prosimetrum text, composed of sections of prose accompanied by poems and single stanzas that both repeat the information contained in the prose and provide it with authority. The relationship between the poems and the prose is complex, and still not fully understood; recent scholarship argues that the text was structured around the poems (Scowcroft 1987: 90; Carey 2005: 44). A number of these poems are likely to predate *Lebor Gabála*, as they are ascribed to known historical poets of the tenth and eleventh centuries. These include Eochaid ua Flannucáin, Flann Mainistrech, Gilla Cóemain and Tanaide, though the majority of the poems in question only survive as part of *Lebor Gabála* itself (Carey 1994: 17–19).

Lebor Gabála survives in five different recensions. Four of them are medieval: these are the earliest A (a text dated to the late eleventh/early twelfth century, preserved in the twelfth-century *Book of Leinster*), followed by B and C in chronological order; the fourth, known as the *Míniugud* recension (literally 'explanation', taken from its manuscript title), is unique, as it is an abridged version found in some manuscripts following Recension B. There is also an early modern recension from the seventeenth century, known as the Ó Cléirigh recension, named after its manuscript scribe, Mícheál Ó Cléirigh (on which see further Fomin, Chapter 4, this volume). However, the relationship between these recensions is by no means clear-cut. Different copies of the text tended to acquire new material to expand upon the story, so that the content and details vary greatly from recension to recension. There is also a great deal of horizontal transmission and contamination across recensions, making the relationship between them even more challenging to disentangle. Scowcroft (1987) has provided the most in-depth analysis to date of this textual tradition. Perhaps because of its complicated history, there are at the moment no complete editions of *Lebor Gabála*. The closest was R. A. S. Macalister's edition in five volumes (published between 1932 and 1942), which remained incomplete after his death and is very difficult to use.[2] For the purposes of this chapter, I focus on the earliest of the recensions, Recension A, as edited by John Carey in his unpublished PhD thesis (1983). Due to the huge scope of the text, this recension has been chosen for its early date and its relative simplicity compared to the later, more extensive recensions.

Recension A of the text can be divided into three different sections. It begins with a short summary of Genesis, focusing on Creation, the descendants of the sons of Noah and the dispersal of the nations. Like all other peoples of Europe, the Gaels are claimed to have descended from Japheth, son of Noah, and deemed to be originally from Scythia (Carey 1983: 77–82). At this point, the narrative moves to the Tower of Babel to introduce

the first two notable ancestors of the Gaídil: Fénius Farsaid and his grandson Gáedel Glas, son of Scota, daughter of the biblical Pharaoh (Carey 1983: 82–3). This is where the migration of the Gaels proper begins: they are presented as departing into exile from Egypt at the same time as the biblical Exodus. Their journey to the destined land of Ireland lasts generations and takes them through most of Europe, to settle eventually in Brigantia, a city in northern Spain, named after the then leader of the Gaels, Bregon (Carey 1983: 83–96).

Once they reach Spain the narrative of their migration is interrupted and the text turns to the history of Ireland before the coming of the Gaels. They were preceded by a number of invaders who took the island before them. These are, in chronological order, Cessair granddaughter of Noah; Partholón mac Sera; Nemed; the Fir Bolg; and the Túatha Dé Danann (Carey 1983: 96). The succession of the invaders follows a repetitive pattern: arrival, notable events, and disappearance of their people from Ireland, either through plague, war or exile. The story of the Gaels resumes after the account of the Túatha Dé Danann (elsewhere important figures in Irish literature).[3] Bregon's son Íth sees Ireland across the sea from a tower in Spain and decides to go there, where he surpasses the kings of the Túatha Dé Danann in judgement and is killed by them in retaliation. To avenge him, the sons of Míl (Íth's nephew) come to Ireland (Carey 1983: 150–1). As the last in this series of invaders, the Gaels finally take over the island, as had been prophesied by their druid Caicher many generations previously (Carey 1983: 159). The text then finishes with long genealogies of Míl's descendants, that culminate in historical population groups (Carey 1983: 159–66) and a long list of pre-Christian and Christian kings of Ireland up to the death of Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill in 1022 (though, in some of the recensions, the text continues up to the reign of Ruaidrí mac Toirrdelbaig Ua Conchobair, d. 1198; Macalister 1942: 404–14).

It is important to note that much of this material is not exclusive to *Lebor Gabála*, nor is its earliest attestation in this text. The origins of the Irish, their wanderings and their arrival in Ireland before the coming of Christianity is a constant theme in Irish texts from a very early period, creating a rich tradition with multiple versions of the narrative. The existence of such prior material is made explicit in *Lebor Gabála* itself by the incorporation into the text of earlier historical poems, but there is other evidence also. One significant alternative version places the origin of the Gaels in Greece rather than in Scythia. This is the case in the aforementioned ninth-century historical poem, *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel?* (Ritari 2017: 162; Todd 1848: 220), written by Máel Muru Othna, an ecclesiastic from the monastery of Othain (Fahan, Co. Donegal), and our earliest extant evidence for a continuous narrative of the Gaels' migration. Other sources for the Greek origin of the Gaels have been discussed by Jaski (2003). The ninth-century Latin historical text *Historia Brittonum* ('History of the Britons'), written in Britain, briefly lists three invasions of Ireland: those of Partholón, Nemed and the three sons of a Spanish soldier ('*tres filii militis Hispaniae*') who saw Ireland from a tower in northern Spain (Morris 1980: 61). Despite being a British text, it cites '*peritissimi Scottorum*' ('the wisest of the Irish') as the source for this information (Morris 1980: 62), which implies that a narrative on Irish origins was circulating at this time (Ní Mhaonaigh and Tyler 2021: 10). Some figures from *Lebor Gabála* also appear in texts and genealogies from as early

as the seventh and eighth centuries: Éremón, one of the sons of Mil, appears as an ancestor figure in the Leinster genealogies in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 502 (O'Brien 1962: 1). Nor is this tradition limited to Britain and Ireland. Ó Riain (2009) has previously discussed a version of the Gaels' migration found in a tenth-century Latin life of St Cathróe of Metz. Szerwiniack (1995) also noted the presence of references to a similar narrative in a number of Hiberno-Latin glosses on Orosius' *History against the Pagans*, found in Vatican Library, Reg. lat. 1650, and a ninth-century manuscript from Reims (ed. Szerwiniack 1992/3 and 2007; see also Clarke 2015: 453). *Lebor Gabála* is, in many ways, the culmination of this long tradition, an attempt to bring together the multiple accounts of the Gaels' migration into one coherent whole. It was also the first text to combine the wanderings of the Gaels with that of earlier invaders, in order to tell one coherent history of the island from Genesis to the present day of composition. That history is then also interpreted on a universal scale, by being placed within the wider framework of a Christian history.

Thus, the origin and migration of the Gaels could not be understood in a vacuum. Migration within Irish history was as important as the context of universal history. The migration of the Gaels is thus contextualized in *Lebor Gabála* by accounts of other invaders of Ireland, who are presented as preceding them chronologically. Genealogies of historical dynastic groups, and lists of pre-Christian and Christian kings of Ireland, are also included, signalling the continuity of the Gaels' history up to the present day of the authors. There was, moreover, a long-standing tradition of Christian and classical history in the context of which medieval Irish historians understood and constructed their own past. The account of the creation of the Irish language, in what may be a ninth-century grammatical tract called *Auraicept na nÉces* ('The Scholars' Primer'), is set in the context of the dispersal of the nations at Babel, for instance, thus giving the Gaels their place in biblical history (Calder 1917: 5; Engesland 2021 and 2024). By the tenth and eleventh centuries, when *Lebor Gabála* was coming into being, the number of texts preoccupied with universal history had multiplied. The eleventh-century *Sex Aetates Mundi* ('Six Ages of the World', Ó Cróinín 1983) recounted biblical history within the Augustinian scheme of the six ages in Irish (Harrison 2000; Clarke and Ní Mhaonaigh 2020: 476). In the same century, the poet Gilla Cóemáin, to whom some of the poems in *Lebor Gabála* are ascribed, composed *Annálad anall uile* ('All the annal writing heretofore'), a poem that synchronizes events from Irish history with events in both biblical and classical history (Ritari 2017: 166; Smith 2007; Mac Gabhann 2024a). This interest in not only the biblical but also the secular history of other nations is illustrated further by the translation into Irish of the *Historia Brittonum* in this period, under the title of *Lebor Bretnach* (literally 'British Book'), reflecting an interest in the history of Ireland's neighbours (Wadden 2016: 15). Such is the universal framework in which *Lebor Gabála* sought to place the wanderings of the Gaels and the pre-Gaelic history of Ireland. Later recensions of the text (B and C) would make this even more explicit, with the inclusion of synchronisms, namely a list of kings drawn ultimately from the Eusebius-Jerome *Chronicon* (on which, see further below) that places kings and other figures from *Lebor Gabála* alongside their biblical, Greek and Roman contemporaries (Macalister 1942: 666–71).

The Irish were not alone in their attempt to find an explanation for the origins of their peoples that also accounted for their place in universal history (Pohl 2018). Narratives of this kind were exceedingly common in the medieval period and, like *Lebor Gabála*, many of them took the form of a migration from a faraway land that drew on both biblical and classical models. Within Britain, both Bede and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* spoke of the coming of the Angles and the Saxons in the form of three eponymous ancestors (Ormrod and Tyler 2020: 2). The *Historia Brittonum* made an eponymous Brittus, himself a descendant of the Trojan Aeneas, the ancestor of the Britons who first migrated to Britain (Morris 1980: 63). In this it followed Frankish sources (Ní Mhaonaigh and Tyler 2021: 11–12), which also had the Franks migrating from Troy, reflecting the popular classical model of Aeneas. Clarke (2015: 467) has recently highlighted the similarities between *Lebor Gabála* and such Carolingian texts as the *Chronicle of Fredegarius*. Despite their different origins (the Franks are Trojans, the Gaels Scythians), their respective journeys through Europe are remarkably similar, sharing locations and routes. Their corresponding ancestors may be different, but both the Irish and Frankish traditions drew on the same classical and late antique sources when constructing the world of the Christian/classical past in which their ancestors originated (Clarke 2015: 456).

In the medieval period, universal history was thus centred in the world of the Bible and of classical antiquity, which became the stage for medieval origin legends (Clarke 2015: 459). Classical and late antique conceptions of geography and history, filtered through a Christian worldview, were essential building blocks for this rather anachronistic setting. The Bible, and especially the Old Testament, were key in this process, representing the earliest historical accounts of their religion for early medieval Christians. Biblical history did not, however, stand in isolation: a universal history could not be constructed without bringing secular history into the overarching narrative of Christianity and salvation. Of all the late antique authors, it was perhaps Eusebius of Caesarea who produced the greatest example of universal history. His *Chronicon*, written in the fourth century, was the first attempt to set out the narratives of multiple world kingdoms side by side. It takes the form of various tables, one for each kingdom (Israel, Babylon, Assyria, Greece, Rome), which list their main rulers and events, thus allowing the reader to follow their parallel developments. Though originally in Greek, it was propagated in the Latin West first through Jerome's translation, where it would become a popular reference text and model for historical writing (Breisach 2007: 81–2). Jerome's translation was a major source for two subsequent late antique authors, who made their own contribution to this universalizing Christian setting: Paulus Orosius and Isidore of Seville. In what follows, I explore how they wrote both national and universal histories, and how their endeavours can help us understand the way in which *Lebor Gabála* frames the migration of the Irish.

Orosius and universal geography

Paulus Orosius was a fifth-century historian who is best known for his *History against the Pagans* (ed. Arnaud-Lindet 1990–1, trans. Fear 2010), which was commonly read by

Irish intellectuals (see O'Rorke, Chapter 2, this volume). Motivated by Augustine of Hippo's request that someone should dive deeper into the matter of the past miseries and suffering of the world, Orosius (who was the latter's pupil) wrote his monumental work in the decade following the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410. His catalogue of misery, war and destruction, from Creation to his present day, was written in response to arguments by pagan *literati* that Roman decay was a direct consequence of the Christianization of the empire, culminating in the attack of Alaric the Goth. Orosius' principal aim was to cast the present suffering of Rome in the light of past miseries, and to show that, contrary to pagan belief, the arrival of Christianity was a marked improvement for the inhabitants of the empire (Merrills 2005: 38–40). His work would go on to be extremely popular in the medieval period (there are 107 manuscript copies from before the twelfth century alone, Mortensen 1999–2000: 105) and a major influence on Christian historiographical thought (Fear 2010: 25). Orosius' popularity is further attested by other texts that show engagement with his work, such as commentaries (see the glosses mentioned above, for example; Szerwiniack 1995) and even translations into the vernacular. The *Old English Orosius*, written in the tenth century, is a famous example from the insular world (ed. Godden 2016; see also Bately 1980).

Perhaps the most notable aspect of Orosius' work is that he began with an extensive geographical description of the world, drawing heavily on classical models. This geographical introduction was highly influential in the medieval period as a source for classical geography, and is preserved on manuscripts in its own right (Lozovsky 2000: 77). For our purposes, however, it is Orosius' use of the physical world as a historian that is the most important. Including a description of the world at the beginning of a history became commonplace in Christian historiography, with authors such as Isidore and Bede following Orosius' example (Merrills 2005: 2). Lozovsky (2000: 73) has discussed how Orosius employs classical geography in a way that is deeply anachronistic and thus generalized, adding a sense of timelessness to the stage he creates for the events of universal history. It is this aspect of his work that will be most relevant to the present discussion of the migration of the Gaels in *Lebor Gabála*, as they travel through an Orosian landscape on their way to Ireland. Lacking the universalizing synchronisms of the later recensions, the only point of contact between the Gaels and the rest of the world in the earliest recension of *Lebor Gabála* is their long journey from Scythia to Ireland. The promised land, Ireland, is perceived as standing at the edge of the known world: in *Lebor Gabála*, Noah sends his granddaughter Cessair to Ireland on the world's western edge in the hope that she will escape the Flood (Carey 1983: 99). Through the migratory journey of the Gaels, however, the island becomes connected to the rest of the world and to universal history.

The way that Orosius described Ireland, moreover, facilitated the connections between it and Spain that are key for the Spanish episode in the migration of the Gaels as told in *Lebor Gabála* (Carey 1983: 88). Orosius had stated that Ireland is situated between Britain and Spain, with its southern edge looking towards the Spanish city of Brigantia (Arnaud-Lindet 1990–1: l.ii.81). As observed in passing above, this city is quite crucial in the Gaels' journey: it is their last stop before their arrival in Ireland. Orosius also described

the city itself (Arnaud-Lindet 1990–1: l.ii.71), mentioning its very tall lighthouse that looks towards Britain. In *Lebor Gabála*, this lighthouse becomes the Tower of Bregon, from which Íth first sees Ireland and makes the decision to travel there (Scowcroft 1988: 14). The connection between Ireland and Spain was stressed again by Isidore, although he does not mention the tower (see below for a general discussion of his work). When Isidore described Ireland in his *Etymologies*, he borrowed Orosius' description of its relative position to Spain, then added a crucial detail regarding its name, explaining its Latin name 'Hibernia' as being derived from the equivalent name for Spain, 'Iberia' (Lindsay 1911: XIV.vi.6; Baumgarten 1984: 193). This etymology served to reinforce the relationship between Ireland and Spain and, combined with Orosius' account of Brigantia and its tower, likely fostered the idea of the Gaels stopping in Spain on their way to Ireland. Manuscript evidence tells us that Irish scholars were aware of the relationship between the two texts. The aforementioned ninth-century Orosian commentary, preserved in Vatican Library, Reg. lat. 1650, adds the Isidorean etymology to Orosius' description of Ireland, as if to complete it (Szerwiniack 1992–3: 67). The portrayals of Ireland and the Iberian Peninsula in Orosius, and subsequently in Isidore, are thus crucial for the Gaels' migration narrative.

The path the Gaels take to reach Ireland from Scythia is also deeply indebted to Orosian geography. *Lebor Gabála* states that they sailed *timchiull in domuin atuaid* ('around the world from the north', Carey 1983: 86 and 239) to reach Ireland, which may seem impossible to a modern reader until Orosius is considered. As Scowcroft notes (1988: 17–18), Orosius places Scythia to the east of the Caspian Sea (Arnaud-Lindet 1990–1: I.ii.47), which is itself connected to the Northern Ocean, where Ireland is located (Arnaud-Lindet 1990–1: I.ii.48). Thus, in the Orosian landscape that *Lebor Gabála* constructs, the imagined sailing route of the Gaels becomes plausible. The Orosian locales named are also significant. Good examples are the Riphaean mountains and the Maeotic marshes, the first two places the Gaels visit after leaving Scythia (Carey 1983: 86–7). For Orosius, these two places are extremely important as, together with the river Tanais, they mark the eastern border of Europe, and the place where this part of the world begins (Arnaud-Lindet 1990–1: I.ii.52). These two landmarks thus act as entrance points for the Gaels into Europe, and frame their journey as one that traverses one whole third of the world (in Orosian terms), with Scythia at one end and the very northern edge of Spain at the other.

The Orosian world encountered by the Gaels during their migration has a long history, which predates *Lebor Gabála*. Scowcroft (1988: 18) has noted that this section of the narrative appears in an almost identical fashion in the poem *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel?* Similar aspects of Orosian geography are also present in other medieval origin stories. Clarke (2015: 464) has noted that Carolingian texts, such as the aforementioned *Chronicle of Fredegarius*, also have the Franks entering Europe through the Maeotic marshes. He further remarks (Clarke 2015: 467) that in the medieval T-O maps of the kind found alongside the works of Isidore of Seville (who, as we have noted, drew heavily on Orosius for his geographical descriptions of the world), the Maeotic marshes often appear as a diagonal waterway dividing Asia and Europe.[4] The classically-inspired world

stage constructed by Orosius was thus not exclusive to the Irish. It became the setting traversed by the ancestors of different European peoples in their migrations, with the Gaels among them.

Geography was thus essential for the way medieval Irish historians constructed their own history and connected it to the past of their classical and late antique predecessors. But history must have a beginning, and thus all origin legends are bound to search for the point of origin of their people. Medieval historians, as we have seen, adopted different ancestors for their own people, among which the Trojans were a popular choice. *Lebor Gabála*, however, chose to trace the Gaels' lineage back to the Scythians instead (Carey 1983: 82). In order to understand that decision, it will be useful to analyse further the writings of Isidore of Seville, as an author who also employed the Scythians as ancestor figures in an origin narrative of migration.

Isidore of Seville and narratives of origins

Writing in the early seventh century, Isidore's reach is perhaps even wider than that of Orosius. He wrote a large number of works covering a great variety of subjects, from the religious to the secular. His general approach to knowledge is best exemplified by his most famous work, the *Etymologies*, a monumental encyclopaedia covering almost every topic imaginable (ed. Lindsay 1911, trans. Barney et al. 2006). As the title suggests, and as discussed by O'Rorke in Chapter 2 of this volume, Isidore was equally famous for his proliferation of etymological practices, which he viewed as essential for proper understanding. As he states, '*Omnis enim rei inspectio etymologia cognita planior est*' ('Indeed, one's insight into anything is clearer when its etymology is known'; ed. Lindsay 1911: I.xxix.2, trans. Barney et al. 2006: 55). His popularity in the medieval period is almost unparalleled: there are about a thousand manuscript witnesses of the *Etymologies* alone, without counting fragments (Fear and Wood 2020: 3). He was highly regarded in Ireland as well, where his *Etymologies* were often referred to as 'in Culmen', 'the Summit of Knowledge' (Ó Máille 1921). Particularly insightful in this regard is the medieval Irish tale *Do fhaillsigud Tána bó Cúailnge* ('On the Recovery of "The Cattle-raid of Cooley"', ed. Murray 2001), which tells the fictitious story of how the only copy in Ireland of the *Táin*, the common title for the extended and famous narrative concerning the cattle-raid of Cooley, was given away in exchange for a copy of Isidore's *Etymologies*. The premise underlines how highly Isidore's *Etymologies* were valued in Ireland.

Isidore employed his wide knowledge of the classical and biblical past, and his etymological approach to learning, to construct the history of the ruling dynasty of Spain in his own time, namely the Visigoths (though Isidore simply called them 'the Goths', and this chapter will follow his terminology). He conceptualized their narrative as that of a migratory people travelling towards their promised land, Spain, which had suffered at the hands of its previous conquerors. Fragments of this narrative are present in the *Etymologies*, but the two works that best represent his perspectives on migration as a historiographical method, as well as universal history, are his *History of the Goths, the*

Vandals and the Sueves (henceforth *History of the Goths*) and his *Chronicle*. The *History of the Goths* tells the story of three different Gothic peoples (Goths, Vandals and Sueves), who came to live in the Iberian Peninsula from their origins as a migratory barbaric people, up until Isidore's present day (ed. and trans. Rodríguez Alonso 1975). It survives in two medieval recensions that reflect two stages of composition and revision, the second being longer, and including two key passages, a eulogy of Spain and one of the Goths (Wood 2020; García Moreno 2005). Despite its name, the text focuses overwhelmingly on the Goths, their narrative being significantly longer than the space dedicated to the Vandals and the Sueves. It follows the reigns of the kings of the Goths from the beginning of their history up to Sisebut and Suintila, in the early seventh century. In this text, Isidore constructs a past for the Goths that paints them in a more positive light than previous historiography had done, highlighting their prowess in war and their abandonment of the Arian heresy for what Isidore deems proper Christianity (Wood 2020: 166).

The second text, Isidore's *Chronicle*, is a spiritual successor to the Eusebius–Jerome *Chronicon*, and draws a significant amount of material from it (ed. Martín 2003). Like Eusebius' work, it is a chronological account of key events in world history, from the Creation to Isidore's present day, though Isidore focuses mostly on biblical and Roman history. Like the *History of the Goths*, it also survives in two distinct medieval recensions that show revision by Isidore himself (Martín 2001). Together, both texts tell a common story, the *Chronicle* providing the universal stage for the more focused *History of the Goths* (Wood 2020: 166). Unlike Orosius' *History against the Pagans* or other works by Isidore, the manuscript evidence for these two historical pieces within an Irish context is dubious, as, to my knowledge, no medieval Irish copy of either work survives. Nonetheless, it is likely that their content was read in Ireland. Isidore's *Chronicle* is included in an abridged form, for instance, in book V of the *Etymologies*, following a discussion of the Augustinian scheme of the Six Ages of the World (Martín 2002). Manuscript witnesses of the *Chronicle* on the Continent abound from the eighth century onwards, and key historical works like the *Chronicle of Fredegarius* borrow extensively from it (Tizzoni 2020: 416). The *History of the Goths*, which did not circulate as widely, is not so well attested outside of Spain, but there are a number of copies in Continental centres with Irish connections. These include a ninth-century manuscript from Verona that later found its way to Metz (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Phillipps 1885) and St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 133, an early ninth-century manuscript that contains both the *Chronicle* and a section of the *History of the Goths* (Furtado 2014: 425, 466). Isidore's work was also known in Britain by this period. Bately (1979) has argued, for example, that Isidore's *Chronicle* was used by the compilers of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Thus, since Isidore's account of the origin of the Goths provides a good parallel example for the migration of the Gaels, and it is possible that his historical works were known in Ireland, I would speculate that Isidore's construction of a past for the Goths may also have served as a model for the Irish migration narrative.

In both his more universal *Chronicle*, and in his *History of the Goths*, Isidore had a similar goal to that of the authors of *Lebor Gabála*, namely to construct a suitable past for the Goths and their success in his own day, and to trace their feats backwards in time and

across universal history. Already in the *Etymologies*, Isidore made a connection between Goths and Scythians by noting that both peoples are descendants of Magog (Lindsay 1911: IX.ii.27). He then used the etymological method of phonetic comparison to reinforce the connection. In his *History of the Goths*, a text whose original title may have been '*De origine gothorum*' ('On the origin of the Goths', Wood 2020: 159), he argued that the only difference between 'Getae' (an alternative name for the Goths) and 'Scythae' (i.e., Scythians) is the first letter (Rodríguez Alonso 1975: 282). Having established the relation between them, he then employed the legacy of the Scythians both to justify and prefigure the Goths' supremacy throughout his writings. A number of historical works follow Eusebius' example in making Ninus, king of the Assyrians, the very first ruler of an empire in secular history (Fotheringham 1923: 16–17), including both Orosius (Arnaud-Lindet 1990–1: I.i.1-4) and *Lebor Gabála* (Carey 1983: 82–3). Isidore's *Chronicle*, however, claims that the honour of being the very first secular kingdom falls to the Scythians, under the reign of Tanus (Martín 2003: 26). Thus, not only are the Scythians the first kingdom upon the earth, their kingdom is never explicitly said to have fallen, unlike all the other world kingdoms (Wood 2013: 153–4). The legacy of the Scythians, from the beginning of secular history, prevails in the kingdom of the Goths. The first recension of the *History of the Goths* reflects this claim to antiquity, when it states that '*Gothorum antiquissimum esse regnum certum est, quod ex regno Scytharum est exortum*' ('The kingdom of the Goths is certainly very ancient, for it came from the kingdom of the Scythians'; Rodríguez Alonso 1975: 172–3).

Etymology might also have played a part in the idea that the Gaels have a Scythian origin. The phonetic similarity between Scythia and the Latin name for the Gaels, 'Scotti', is certainly much stronger than Isidore's etymology for the name of the Goths.[5] And, like Isidore, *Lebor Gabála* also employs the Scythian origin of the Gaels both as a framing mechanism for the Gaels' migration and as a means of claiming historical authority. This is particularly notable in the biblical introduction, where the history of the Gaels before their migration is set out. The text, especially in the first recension, focuses overwhelmingly on the history of the Scythians/Gaels. All other secular kingdoms mentioned in the text only serve the purpose of providing an adequate framework for the origin of the Gaels. Ninus, king of the Assyrians, has already been mentioned as a commonplace at the beginning of universal histories, but in *Lebor Gabála* he is crucially made the first king of the world (Carey 1983: 82). He thus remains unconnected to any particular kingdom, acting as little more than a chronological marker for a key ancestor of the Irish, Fénius Farsaid, from whom another name for the Irish, the Féni, was claimed to have derived (Carey 1990: 109). Other peoples are briefly mentioned, either as descendants of Noah's sons (Carey 1983: 79–80), or in connection with the list of the seventy-two languages of the world out of which Fénius Farsaid created the Irish language (Carey 1983: 83–5), but they do little more than provide a backdrop for the ancestry of the Gaels. Egypt and the Israelites also appear briefly, but only to provide a comparison for the Gaels' exile in the form of the biblical Exodus (Carey 1983: 85) and to generate a catalyst for the return of the Gaels to Scythia from Egypt. This is followed eventually by *Lebor Gabála*'s brief discussion of dynastic in-fighting in Scythia, which acts as the final spur for the beginning of the Gaels'

migration (Carey 1983: 85–6). By providing a sparse biblical backdrop for the Gaels as originally Scythian, *Lebor Gabála* depicts them as one of the original nations at the very beginning of universal history, just as Isidore does for the Goths. This historical backdrop is then enhanced by the narrative of migration. Not only are the Gaels, as descendants of the sons of Noah through their Scythian ancestors, an ancient biblical people, but they can claim continuity back to the earliest phase of universal history. By tracing their journey from the Near East to Ireland, *Lebor Gabála* reinforces the biblical legacy of the Gaels, and connects it through the genealogies of the sons of Míl to historical dynastic groups.

The Gaels' claims to Ireland as their final destination, however, did not go uncontested. They were not, after all, the only people to reach the island in their wanderings: *Lebor Gabála* describes in great detail the invasions of the different peoples who came to Ireland before them, as noted above. These other invaders serve multiple objectives in the text, not least as a point of comparison for the Gaels. Ethnic identity cannot be constructed in a vacuum: a particular people's position is, in part, defined by the kingdoms and peoples around them, their successes and their failures and, of course, their histories. Isidore was particularly aware of this when writing about the origin of the Goths. He acknowledges that the Goths were not the first to conquer Spain, nor the only migratory people to invade it. He therefore also had to discuss those other groups, their successes and their failures, in relation to the Goths, in order to show the latter as the true inheritors of Spain. Understanding this process in Isidore's writing is beneficial for understanding *Lebor Gabála*'s narrative of multiple migrations, as well as the relationship between the Gaels and the other invaders.

Isidore places special emphasis on the kingdoms and peoples that threaten the primacy of the Goths in his narrative, as well as on groups of similar origin but whose success was lesser in comparison to them. Isidore's *History of the Goths* exploits this strategy most clearly through the fact that it is, as we have seen, not just a history of the Goths, but also of the other two peoples who lived in Spain at the time, namely the Vandals and the Sueves. Though their histories read like something of an afterthought at the end of the work, the Vandals and the Sueves are present in both redactions, showing that Isidore considered them an important part of the text from its inception (Merrills 2006: 38). Their presence is, in fact, key, as they function as a shadow of the Goths, a failed version of a similar people. In this regard, the three peoples have a comparable origin and trajectory. They all trace their history back to the north of the world, migrating south, and eventually settling in Spain. Only the Goths, however, succeeded in their goal of conquering Spain (Merrills 2006: 39). Merrills (2006: 40) has highlighted how Isidore put great emphasis on the relative failures of the Vandals and Sueves in contrast to the Goths. The Goths and their journey are given a strong sense of direction and inevitability, especially in the second recension of the *History of the Goths*. The text opens in praise of Spain, showing from the beginning that the Goths are defined in their journey by its destination, their promised land (Rodríguez Alonso 1975: 168–70). The Vandals and the Sueves, however, are rather aimless in their migration. In contrast to the Goths, they appear to reach Spain almost by mere chance. Their journey is depicted as a movement away from their homeland, rather than one with a firm destination in sight (Merrills 2006: 42).

The clear differences between the three peoples are also emphasized by their respective behaviours. The Vandals and the Sueves are portrayed throughout as violent, engaging in warfare that leads only to defeat and suffering. As an example, we may compare the way the Goths, the Vandals and the Sueves are described when raiding and invading a new territory. When narrating the Sack of Rome, Isidore went to great lengths to show that the Goths were merciful conquerors, sparing Christians and their holy places (Rodríguez Alonso 1975: 194). Wood (2013: 151) has noted how, in the first recension of the *History of the Goths*, Roman citizens prefer the rule of the Goths to that of the empire after the Sack (Rodríguez Alonso 1975: 196). When the Vandals and the Sueves invade Spain for the first time, however, they are presented in a much more negative light. The second recension of the *History of the Goths* describes the horrors brought by their attack. As one of the prophesied four plagues, they brought carnage and drove the locals to such poverty that they turned to cannibalism to survive (Rodríguez Alonso 1975: 290). Once in Spain, their destructive and fruitless campaigns of war are depicted as continuing. Merrills (2006: 42–5) describes their failed battles and attempts at hegemony, which bring nothing but destruction, and how they are punished by God for their crimes. One may note, for example, the reign of the Vandal king Gunderic, killed by the Lord after he attacked the churches of Seville (Rodríguez Alonso 1975: 292). The kingdoms of both Vandals and Sueves are, indeed, eventually subdued and absorbed by the Goths, and the *History of the Goths* ends '*regnum autem Sueuorum deletum in Gothis transfertur*' ('With the kingdom of the Sueves destroyed, it passed into the hands of the Goths'; Rodríguez Alonso 1975: 320). Despite their similar origins as a migrating people, only the Goths were destined to succeed.

Isidore's portrayal of the Goths' opponents is in some ways echoed by the way *Lebor Gabála* treats the other invaders of Ireland, who are similarly of biblical descent. Cessair is a daughter of Noah. Partholón is a descendant of Japheth through Magog. Nemed's genealogy is traced back to the Greeks of Scythia and, through him, to two other groups who preceded the Gaels – the Fir Bolg and the Túatha Dé Danann (Carey 1983: 80). Like the Gaels, they all come to Ireland by sea after a long, gruelling journey. But this is where the similarities between the peoples ends. Only the Gaels, like the Goths, are, from the beginning, destined to reach and conquer the promised land, in this case Ireland. As the druid Caicher tells his fellow exiles, '*Érgid . . . ní anfam co rrísam Érind*' ('Get up, we shall not rest until we come to Ireland'; Carey 1983: 87 and 240). The other invaders arrive almost by chance, either with no explanation or with ulterior motives. Cessair is running away from the Flood; there is no explanation for the coming of Partholón or Nemed; Nemed's descendants come back after being defeated and expelled by the Fomorians (Carey 1983: 110). Even while in Ireland, their story resembles that of the failed Vandals and Sueves more than it does that of the triumphant Goths. The Gaels are welcomed upon their arrival by a personified Ireland herself, who recognizes their predestined rule: '*Cian ó tá oc fádib far tuidecht. Bid lib co bráth ind insi seo*' ('Your coming has long been known to prophets. You shall have this island forever'; Carey 1983: 156 and 312). The other invaders, like the Vandals and the Sueves, are depicted in a much more negative light. We might compare the portrayal of the latter as violent marauders with the way

some of the invaders of Ireland are described. The Túatha Dé Danann are perceived as a detriment to the island, for instance ('*Is cruaid in crobang ros cráid / Tuatha Dé Donann do chéin*', 'it was a cruel troop which afflicted them: / the Tuatha Dé Danann from afar'; Carey 1983: 123 and 278). Nemed is explicitly characterized as 'a plague of fire upon the doomed' ('*teidm teined tar trocha*'; Carey 1983: 112 and 267). Whether eradicated by plague, warfare or the cunning of the Gaels against their trickery, not a single one of these other invaders succeeds in laying claim to the island for more than a couple of generations. They are all eventually overshadowed by the arrival of the Gaels, and disappear into the realm of memory and the past. The success of the Gaels' migration is thus emphasized by the failure of the other peoples who attempted to lay claim to Ireland.

Irish migration and late antique models: conclusions

Tales of migration as an origin legend for a people were commonplace from antiquity to the early medieval period. Late antique and early medieval historians had a long history of models to draw upon, from the Virgilian Trojans to the biblical Exodus of the Israelites. In *Lebor Gabála*, the Gaels migrated from Scythia to Ireland, and in doing so they traversed the historical and literary grounds of their predecessors. Orosius provided medieval Irish historians with a European geography deeply rooted in the classical tradition onto which to map the journey of their ancestors conceptually. Similarly, it is possible that Isidore's narrative of the Goths could have provided a model for how to reconcile the history of a migratory, pagan people with the extensive legacy of a Roman, Christian Europe, as well as how to reconcile them with the presence of other similarly migratory peoples in their current territories. In this chapter I hope to have shown how *Lebor Gabála* embraced the framework and approaches of late antique authors Orosius and Isidore, and applied them productively to the migration narrative of the Gaels, highlighting the connections of the traditional Gaels to the broader world.

Notes

1. The alternative spelling 'Goídil' is also common, and is listed alongside 'Gaídil' in *eDIL*, the *Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language*. I have chosen to use the latter throughout this discussion, as it is the spelling used in the first recension of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* itself, and because it illustrates more clearly the text's etymology for the name Gáedel Glas, the eponymous ancestor of the Gaels.
2. The main difficulty with Macalister's edition is that it breaks up the text. He divided the text into thematic sections, within which he printed the prose text from each recension, while separating it from its corresponding poems. The poems themselves are printed separately at the end of each section, numbered with Roman numerals, and only linked to the prose text through the citation of their respective numbers in between the prose passages. This makes it extremely difficult for a reader to grasp the actual form of the text in any specific recension or manuscript, without excessive flipping back and forth. A guide to the edition was subsequently compiled by Scowcroft (1987: 139–42), in an attempt to make it easier to navigate.

3. The Túatha Dé Danann may be generally recognizable to the reader as legendary divinities from Ireland's pagan past who were once human in form. However, *Lebor Gabála* presents conflicting information on their nature. In the passage discussed here, they are presented simply as another group of human descendants of Japheth, who just so happen to have been trained in druidry. Elsewhere they are presented as supernatural beings. For a representative discussion of the issue, see Carey 2024 and, more generally Williams 2017.
4. T-O maps are very simple diagrams of the earth that depict the three continents, Asia, Europe and Africa, divided by three main watercourses (the 'T') and surrounded by the Ocean (the 'O'). For a discussion of T-O maps, see Mauntel 2021: 57–65.
5. Carey (1994: 12–13) was the first to note the similarity between this etymology and Isidore's explanation of the connection between Goths and Scythians in the *History of the Goths*, though he was cautious about the circulation of this text outside of Spain in the early period.

CHAPTER 4
IRISH IDENTITY, STORIES OF MIGRATION AND MODELS FROM GRAECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY[1]

Maxim Fomin

Early medieval Continental and insular texts on the origins of nations

In his most recent contribution on the origin legends of Ireland, Professor Thomas Charles-Edwards (2022: 67) pointed out that 'a common theme in Irish origin legends was migration. The Milesian Legend was itself a story of migration, as was the linguistic origin legend.' The immediate implication of such stories, according to Charles-Edwards, was the implication that the group of settlers 'migrated from the eastern Mediterranean to an island off the north-west coast of Europe' and that 'Irish and Irishness were not connected to the island of Ireland' (2022: 52). The Irish *literati* defined Irish identity specifically within the scope of the migrations framework, inspired by the early medieval compilations on the origins of various peoples.

Throughout the Middle Ages, group identities were understood as objective realities created as the consequence of a specific event (or series of events), usually in the distant past. Accounts of those creations sought to explain when, where and how peoples (in many instances connected to a founding figure or a group of primordial founders), with their distinctive languages, cultures and other characteristics, came into being. Such origin legends proliferated in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages; they include Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks* (*c*. 591), Isidore of Seville's *History of the Goths, the Vandals and the Sueves* (*c.* 624, whose importance for Irish authors is mapped out by Blanco Ríos, Chapter 3, this volume), Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (*c*. 731), the anonymous Frankish *Chronicle of Fredegarius* (*c*. 660) and the *Book of the History of the Franks* (*c.* 727), Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards* (*c.* 795), and the anonymous *History of the Britons* (*c*. 829–30), ascribed by Theodor Mommsen to a Welsh monk Nennius (for a recent defence of this attribution, see Guy 2015: 47–54). To this list, the sixth-century *Getica* by Jordanes and *On the Ruin of Britain* by Gildas should also be added.

Scholars divide such origin stories into four categories: 'those in some way derived from the text known as the Frankish Table of Nations, those stemming ultimately from biblical genealogies (following the influence of Isidore of Seville) [i.e. the 'New Israel' model], origin legends claiming descent from Troy, and those professing a Scandinavian ancestry' (Brady and Wadden 2022: 5, following Reynolds 1983). The distinctions between these categories are not always clear-cut, however, and categories may naturally

overlap with one another. The works of Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon exhibit the influence of the Roman literary tradition and fall under the Trojan category, for instance (see Brady and Wadden 2022: 13; Goffart 2006; Coumert 2007), along with *History of the Britons* as 'the earliest surviving reference to the Trojan origins of the British people (and thus their descendants, the Welsh)' (Fulton 2022: 340). However, one may find influences of other migratory categories in the same compositions. Thus, the so-called Frankish Table of Nations framework was incorporated into the *History of the Britons* (Wadden 2016: 1–12), and 'explicitly connected to the biblical Table of Nations' (Guy 2022: 369), while the Exodus story was particularly important for the *Book of the History of the Franks* and Gildas' *On the Ruin of Britain*. The *History of the Goths* by Isidore explains the origin of the Gothic nation by positing an etymological connection between the 'Getae' (an alternative name for the Goths) and the 'Scythae', Scythians. The Spanish author reinforces the link between the Goths and the Scythians by noting that both have a common origin through being descended from Magog, the son of Japeth (also discussed by Blanco Ríos, Chapter 3: 50–2, this volume; cf. Buchberger 2022: 28–9, 31), thus generating a connection with the Table of Nations category.

One of the earliest records of the origin-legend of the Irish appears in Nennius' *History of the Britons* (*c*. 830, discussed in Chapter 3: 43, this volume), clearly based on a pre-existing source in Old Irish, since the Latin text includes the Irish phrase *dam ochtair*, 'a company of eight', misunderstood as a proper name Damhochtor (Scowcroft 1988: 22–4). Another early source, again discussed in by Blanco Ríos (Chapter 3: 43), is the Irish poem *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel?* ('Whence the origins of the Irish?') by Mael Muru Othna (d. 887). Carey (2015: 438) summarizes: 'Like many *senchas* poems, "Can a mbunadus [na nGáedel]" begins with a series of questions: what is the origin of the Gaels, what brought them to Ireland, where they had been before, what is the background of the various names applied to them?' Both Nennius and Mael Muru Othna refer to the Scythian origin of the Gaels and include their sojourn in Egypt until the flight of the Israelites (see, respectively, Clarke 2015: 466–9; and Carey 2006: 154–5; 2015: 437–9). To this, Mael Muru Othna adds, 'Japheth, royal son of righteous Noah, from him is our people, we are of the Greeks in our origin, in our laws' (trans. Jaski 2003: 12). These records connect the origin legend of the Irish with the New Israel motif and the Table of Nations category outlined above, with Mael Muru's poem being 'the earliest extended account of the origins of the Gaels, and a key text in the tradition that culminated in the great synthesis known as *Lebor gabála* [*Book of invasions*]' (Carey 2015: 429). In the previous chapter, Pau Blanco Ríos focused on Recension A of the complex network of texts that make up *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, charting the influences of late antique historiography on its presentation of Irish migrations. In this chapter, I first sketch out the various stories of migrations presented in different recensions of the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* compilation, before focusing on the seventeenth-century O'Cléirigh recension, discussing throughout the degree to which they demonstrate the influence of Graeco-Roman antiquity.

The Book of Invasions of Ireland (*Lebor Gabála Érenn*) in *The Book of Leinster*

The twelfth-century manuscript popularly known as *The Book of Leinster* (*LL*) opens with a copy of *The Book of Invasions of Ireland* (*Lebor Gabála Érenn*), drawing upon earlier traditions, reflected in the above-mentioned compositions by Mael Muru Othna and other earlier figures, such as the poets Flann Mainistrech (d. 1056) and Gilla Cóemáin (fl. 1072), whose engagements with classical antiquity have been discussed by Peter Smith (2007, 2024a, 2024b). The compilers of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* made an extensive use of compilatory approaches, such as Isidore's etymologizing techniques (Carey 1994: 12–13), drawing upon recognizable place names paralleled in Fredegarius (Carey 1994: 15–16) and Orosius (Carey 2006: 155–6; see also Blanco Ríos, Chapter 3: 47–50, above). Supporting the view that the ancestry of the Irish was analogous in spirit to those proposed in other European origin-legend compilations, the Irish *literati* enriched native stories of migrations with as many categorizations and theories as possible. For example, various recensions of *Lebor Gabála* differ in terms of the application of the Table of Nations framework. Recension M establishes Magog as the forefather of the Irish, while this is Japheth in Recension B, and Gomer in recension A. As Clarke (2015: 458) has argued, the Irish origin legends were 'being worked out among the nascent ethnographies of Carolingian Europe'. Such diversity within the origin models facilitated the compilers' attempts to verify the antiquity of the Irish. Ben Guy (2022: 371) observes that 'the Irish origin legend far exceeds all other origin legends of peoples surviving from medieval Europe in terms of scope, detail, and precision. It represents the summit achievement rather than the standard type.'

Scholars who study *Lebor Gabála Érenn* are often polarized in their opinions on the categorization of its origin legends. Following Marc Scowcroft's studies (1987, 1988; also 2009) on the growth of the *Lebor Gabála* tradition, the opinion prevailed that '*Lebor Gabála*, and thus the Irish history,' had been 'carefully constructed to correspond with that of the Israelites' (Schlüter 2010: 38; see also Carey 1993: 19; Clarke 2015: 444), until Bart Jaski presented a hypothesis that the development of the Irish origin legend was based on the premise that 'Irish medieval scholars thought the Irish descended from the Greeks' (2009: 50; 2003). The application of the Frankish Table of Nations category in the context of the *Lebor Gabála* tradition has been discussed by Wadden (2016: 20), who suggests that 'the pedigree of the Gaels [was] set within the context of a broader picture of the progeny of Japheth, and thus helped establish the place of the Irish among the peoples of the world'. As Clarke (2012: 32, 47) has shown, however, the medieval Irish *literati* were aware of these distinctions between versions of the Irish origin narratives and tried to reconcile them.

Variants become significant, moreover, when dealing with a single manuscript, itself containing multiple recensions in which various versions of *Lebor Gabála* are penned side by side. Thus, when one analyses a copy of *Lebor Gabála* contained in *The Book of Leinster*, the conclusion is born that it 'synchronises the history of the Irish with the

Israelites' (Schlüter 2017: 99), bridging 'the vast blank separating Irish tradition from accepted world history' (Scowcroft 1988: 63). *The Book of Leinster*, moreover, would 'set the tone for the formative and normative orientation of the whole manuscript [of *Lebor Gabála*]' with the general account coming first, followed by 'accounts of histories and fates of various kings in various provinces . . . an indication that they strove to produce a systematic account of Irish history' (Schlüter 2010: 37).

In discussing the components of the Irish foundation myth according to *The Book of Leinster* version, one can note such elements as the creation of the Irish language from seventy-two languages of the world, providing 'Irish historians with the first claim of Irish superiority over other tribes' (Schlüter 2010: 38), and the Isidorean influence, seen in the close geographical and genealogical connection between Ireland and Spain (Carey 2001: 10; cf. Blanco Ríos, Chapter 3, this volume). Once they feel certain they have firmly placed the Irish (the Gaels, *Gáedel*) on the world map, *The Book of Leinster* compilers move on to discuss various tribes that settled in Ireland previously, descended from Cessair, Partholón mac Sera, Nemed mac Agnoman of the Greeks of Scythia, the Fir Bolg, the Fir Domnann, the Gáileóin and the Túatha Dé Danann. The following phrase towards the end of *Lebor Gabála* demonstrates, as Schlüter (2010: 39–40) has noted, 'the fundamental importance of the past for the definition of identity' among the Irish ('*sasai fir fenichas fris deib feig fochmarc*', *LL* 1795–6 = Best, Bergin and O'Brien 1954: 56, 'it is the lore of the past which sustains a man: at the end his inquiry is keen', trans. Schlüter 2010: 39).

Míchéal Ó'Cléirigh's seventeenth-century recension of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*

The Book of Leinster version of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* is mentioned as one of the sources for the late recension of that same narrative compiled by, and under the instigation of, the seventeenth-century Irish scribe Míchéal Ó Cléirigh (*c.* 1590–*c.* 1643).[2] Four scribes worked on Ó Cléirigh's recension of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, including Ó Cléirigh himself, Fear Feasa Ó Maoil Chonaire, Cú Coigcríche Ó Cléirigh and Cú Coigcríche Ó Duibhgeannáin, in Lisgoole, Co. Fermanagh, between 22 October and 22 December 1631. They compiled their text on the basis of various sources, including *The Book of Leinster*, *The Great Book of Lecan* and Royal Irish Academy MS D iv 3 (1224). The influence of Ó Cléirigh's recension was significant, with at least nine later manuscripts copied from Ó Cléirigh's *Lebor Gabála* compilation.[3]

An example of the textual puzzle, and the sense of bewilderment that the various versions and their telling of the coming of the sequential groups presented to Ó Cléirigh and his fellow compilers, is embodied in the introduction contained in the dedication and the epistle addressed to the reader, as Breatnach (2010: 6–8) observes:

> Lamenting the loss of books in the recent upheaval . . . the object of the enterprise [is] 'to purify, correct, and transcribe' the old chronicle called *Leabhar Gabhála*

> [i.e. *Lebor Gabála*] (*glanadh*, *ceartughadh*, *sgríobhadh* are the terms used) . . . Two principal motives behind the undertaking are cited: (1) to continue the work of elucidation of the history of the saints and the succession of the kings of Ireland . . . (2) to provide a trustworthy text from which a translation of *LG* into other languages could be undertaken.

Most importantly, for the group of scribes working under the instigation of Ó Cléirigh, the sources drawn together all stem from the tradition of Irish historiography, which, as the close reading of the RIA MS 23 K 32 manuscript confirms, highlights the importance of connections made to the origin-legend theories of other European nations discussed above. Ó Cléirigh's recension describes the first, the second and the fourth waves of settlers to Ireland (Cessair, Partholón and the Fir Bolg) navigating across the Mediterranean Sea, following the itinerary of the Trojan survivors (to which I return below).

The first group of non-Gaelic settlers, led by Cessair, leaves Meroe island, fleeing a flood, and travels over the Mediterranean, the Caspian and the Cimmerian seas to reach Asia Minor, travelling on to the Alps, then on to Spain, from where they arrived in Ireland at Dun na mBarc in Corco Duibhne (Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 10 = RIA 23 K 32, fol. 1). Meroe island is mentioned by the Irish geographer Dicuil in his early ninth-century work *On the Measurement of the World* (vi.10; cf. Tierney 1967: 60–1), and was known to Isidore (*Etymologies*, XIII.xxi.8). It seems likely that Ó Cléirigh's choice of Meroe Island as the initial point of Cessair's journey was dependant on Recension A of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, drawing upon *The Book of Fermoy* (cf. Macalister 1933: 180). As far as the second wave of settlers to Ireland is concerned, Ó Cléirigh agrees with the earlier traditions that link Partholón's origins to Greece, found in *Lebor Gabála*'s Recension A, this time borrowing from *The Book of Leinster* version (*conos toracht Partholon anair a tír Gréc*, *LL* 414 = Best, Bergin and O'Brien 1954: 13, 'till Partholón came out from the east, out of the land of Greece'):

> *Bá fás tra Ére . . . iar ndílinn conus torracht Partholon mac Seara . . . meic Magog, meic Iapheth, meic Noe, asin Grég . . . ona atharda .i. ó Sicil Grecc.*
>
> *Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 24 = RIA 23 K 32, fol. 5*

> Now Ireland was desert . . . after the flood till Partholon, son of Sear, . . . son of Magog, son of Japheth, son of Noe came to it out of Greece . . . from his native land, that is, from Sicily of the Greeks.
>
> *trans. Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 25*

The third wave of settlers, that of Nemed, comes 'from the Greeks of Scythia', a genealogy also dependant on *The Book of Leinster* version (*do Grecaib Scithia*, *LL* 392 = Best, Bergin and O'Brien 1954: 13). Describing the coming of the tribes led by Nemed to Ireland, their battle with the Fomóire leading to Nemed's expulsion from Ireland, and the bringing down of Conand's tower (*Togail Tuir Chonaind*, *LL* 797–856 = Best, Bergin and

O'Brien 1954: 25–6), the compilers include a synchronism, which aligns the exile of the tribes of Israel from Egypt and the fleeing of the tribes led by Gáedel Glas, ancestor of the Gaels, to Scythia (*LL* 849–52 = Best, Bergin and O'Brien 1954: 27). Ó Cléirigh's recension expands the episode concerning the destruction of Conand's tower as it portrays the tribes of Nemed receiving forces drawn from Greece, and in particular, help from one Rélbeo, daughter of the king of the Greeks, a druidess, who enters into a liaison with Conand, confusing his state of mind.

There is a clear parallelism between Scota, the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh, the mother of Gáedel Glas, who assists the Gaels in fleeing from Egypt to Scythia (Carey 2006: 153–5; also Clarke 2015: 445), and Rélbeo, the Greek princess who helps the tribes of Nemed to defeat the Fomóire using her magic. Breatnach (2010: 19–20, esp. n. 40) points out the absence of the story of Rélbeo from the medieval versions of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, suggesting that 'it is conceivable that [Ó Cléirigh's recension] drew from a tale (or tales) now lost, which was known to compilers of the medieval tale-lists' (with reference to Mac Cana 1980: 55, 61, 92). Ó Cléirigh was evidently influenced by the medieval tradition in positing women as eponymous and original founders. As a parallel, one can point at the legend of Albina (which received wide circulation in Britain from mid-fourteenth century) used as a prologue to British history. Albina, also a princess of a Greek dynasty, arrives with her sisters on the island of Britain, thus constituting the first founders of Albion, and her descendants, the giants, populated the island before the coming of the Trojans led by Brutus, from whom Britain was subsequently named (see further Carley and Crick 2001).[4]

Ó Cléirigh's sequence of settlers continues:

> *Bá fás tra Ere triocha bliadna iar ttaimleacht muintire Partholoin, conus torracht Nemhidh mac Agnomain . . . meic Magog &tc. do Greccaib Scitia, innte*
>
> *Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 72 = RIA 23 K 32, fol. 19*

> Now Ireland was waste thirty years after the plague-burial of Partholón's people, till Neimhedh son of Agnoman . . . son of Magog etc. of the Greeks of Scythia, reached it.
>
> *trans. Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 73*

Partholón and Nemed (i.e., 'Neimhedh' mentioned here) are connected to Noah through descent from his son Japheth. This genealogical reconstruction is identified as the Table of Nations category, although, ultimately, Ó Cléirigh's recension connected the origin of Partholón and of the fourth wave of settlers, the Fir Bolg, with Greece:

> *Bá fás dí[di]u Éire . . . ier ndul na ttri ndechneabhar atrubrumar eiste, co toideacht do shliocht toisigh dechneabair innti do ridhisi ina bFeraib Bholg. Do clannaibh Neimhedh iar mbunadhus doibhsidhe . . . co rogaibset isin Grecc.*
>
> *Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 116 = RIA 23 K 32, fol. 33*

> Now Ireland was desert . . . after the departure of the three decades of men we have mentioned till the coming of the race of the chief decade into it, as the Fir Bolg. Of the children of Neimhedh by descent were they . . . who landed in Greece.
>
> *trans. Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 117*

In Ó Cléirigh's notional picture of the waves of settlers, the Tuatha Dé Danann, as the fifth group to arrive to Ireland, inhabit the northern islands in Greece (Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 142–3 = RIA 23 K 32, fol. 41). The recension also includes an enigmatic passage on the Tuatha Dé Danann's alliance with the Athenians in their fight against the Philistines, reworking an earlier medieval version:

> *Iar bforbadh a ffoghloma doibsiomh, do choidset eitir Athennstaib 7 Felistineda, gur ronaitrebhsat etorra. Ro eirigh din cogtha 7 congala eitir na cenelaibh sin iarrtain gur bat misgneach mírúnach imoroile . . . Atraghat dána Túath Dé imbaidh na nAthensta iarsuidhe, condolbdais tria draoidheacht spioratta deamhnacdha hi curpu (MS. curpaibh) an fianlaigh do marbhta dona hAithenstaibh, gomtis ionchatha; 7 co ttochraitis friu doridhisi. Ba machtnadh adbal las na Felistindaibh na fioru no marbdais d'faicsin do cathughadh friú isin laithe ar ccind.*
>
> *Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 144, 146, §92 = RIA 23 K 32, fol. 42*

> After they completed their learning, they went between the Athenians and the Philistines, so that they dwelt between them. Now there arose battles and fightings between those races after that, so that they were malicious and evil disposed one to the other . . . Then the Tuatha De join in friendship with the Athenians, so that they formed through druidry demon-spirits in the bodies of the soldiers of the Athenians who were slain, so that they were fit for battle; so that they used to encounter them [the Philistines] again. The Philistines thought it immensely astonishing to see the men they used to slay fighting with them the day after.
>
> *trans. Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 145, 147*

The motif of the resurrection of dead warriors able to fight the next day is also attested in the medieval insular tradition (discussed in Sims-Williams 2005; Green 1998; and Le Roux 1955). One can refer to The Second Branch of the *Mabinogi*, where Brân the Blessed, son of Llŷr, the king of all Britain, offers that his future son-in-law, the Irish king Matholwch, takes a magic cauldron of rebirth (*peir dadeni*): 'I will give you a cauldron, and the property [*kynnedyf*] of the cauldron is [this]: a man of yours who may be killed today, thrown into the cauldron, will be as good as when he was at his best tomorrow, except that he will have no speech [*llyueryd*]' (trans. Carey 2007: 46–7; text in Williams 1951: 34–5). John Carey (2007: 67–8) proposed 'an Irish background for the search of the miraculous vessel', identified as 'a magic cauldron, which has the property of reviving the dead'. However, no such cauldron is explicitly mentioned in Ó Cléirigh; the focus is rather on the magic that the Tuatha Dé Danann learned while they were in Greece – and were able to perform by reviving the dead Athenian warriors.

The Tuatha Dé Danann are described as studying magic and 'many various arts' (*ilcerda éccsamhla*) including 'sorcery, frenzy, conflict and every pagan distress' (*fiothnasecht, amaitecht, coinbliocht 7 gach saeithe gleintlechta*, Macalister and Mac Neill 1916: 142, *cp.* RIA MS D iii 3 (777), 22-3: *fithniseacht, amaideacht, coinbliocht 7 gach saoithe geinntleachta*; see the electronic *Dictionary of the Irish Language s.v. fithnasacht*, *conblicht,* 2 *saithe*, *gentlecht*). The combination of the words used here conveys the sense that the Tuatha Dé Danann were able to perform their magic in battle (cf. *conblicht*, from the Latin *conflictus*), and their service to the Athenians serves as an illustration. A similar example is attested in the late fifteenth-century text *Stair Ercuil ocus a Bás* ('The History of Hercules and his Death'), where magic is used by Jupiter to affect the natural elements: 'Jupiter threw the winds into horrible, bewitched conflict' (*do chuir iarum Jupiter conblicht duaibsech draighechta forna gaothaibh*, Quin 1939: 56–7).

Michael Clarke (2012: 24–5) has drawn attention to 'a Carolingian commentary on Genesis, *Pauca Problesmata*, which forms part of the Irish or Irish-related Reference Bible'. It linked '*omnes artes diaboli*', 'all the arts of the Devil', with '*gigantes et magi*', 'the giants and the wizards' (*Pauca Problesmata* §239.9), the giants said in the Bible to be offspring of Cain (Genesis 6.1-4). John Carey (2019: 46–7) has highlighted *The Book of Leinster*'s copy of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (*LL* 1058–60 = Best, Bergin and O'Brien 1954: 33–4), where 'certain professions [are] described as having their own kinds of magic, but this magic is associated with the Túatha Dé': *Tuath Dea tra in sin .i. dee in t-aes dána . . . Is accu batar brechta druad 7 arad 7 cuthchaire 7 deogbaire*, 'Those are the Túath Dé, then; that is, the people of skills were gods . . . It is they who had the spells of druids and charioteers and trappers and cupbearers' (trans. Carey 2019: 47).

As observed in Chapter 3 (54 n.3), the Tuatha Dé Danann are not always represented as superhuman, but Ó Cléirigh's recension certainly stresses that aspect and associates it with ancient Greece. While the biblical framework described the Philistines as the antagonists of another important nation, the Israelites, which was well known to Irish intellectuals (see Mac Eoin 1960: 132–3), the Athenians metaphorically replace them in Ó Cléirigh's passage. Ó Cléirigh endows the Tuatha Dé Danann with the gift of raising the dead, echoing Isidore of Seville's view of the *magi* (magicians) as necromancers (*Etymologies* VIII.ix.11). Isidore credits the ghosts brought back to life with an ability 'to prophesy and answer questions' (Klingshirn 2003: 85). In contrast, however, Ó Cléirigh presents the warriors resurrected by the Tuatha Dé Danann as unable to speak.

In *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, different tribes and groups arrive in Ireland who are powerful enough to exhibit feats of magic or engage in warfare, but they are not capable of maintaining control over the island. Some of these tribes vanish once the sequence of floods covers the island in water, or else they give up their place to newcomers and take their abode underground.[5] As such, the stories of Cessair, Partholón, Nemed, the Fir Bolg and the Tuatha Dé Danann are not nationhood narratives – they are cosmogonies. 'Concerned with the deeds of the inhabitants of the Irish otherworld' (Toner 2005: 348), such stories presented 'a euhemeristic attempt to find a place for Ireland' (Carey 2018: 5) in the context of medieval cosmography.

Stories of migrations in ninth- and tenth-century origin legends

Did the earlier Irish origin legends elaborate on the classical framework where the ancestors of the Gaels were compared with the survivors of the Fall of Troy? The previously mentioned poem *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel*? ('Whence the origins of the Irish?'), by Mael Muru Othna, contains an account of the travel of the Gaels as they leave Egypt fleeing the Pharaoh, and therefore connects the origin of the Irish with the New Israel model:

In n-aidchi uair dar belach Mara Ruaid sairset.
Raiset sech Indé sech Assia ar don fessid.
Don Scithia co mbríg n-uasail da tír fessin.
For muncind Mara Caisp gabsat cethirn dílis.
Foracsat Glass in Coronis ar muir Libis.
Luid Srú mac Esrúi iar tanaib ba cen miffri.
Timchell atúaid trom co dathe Slebe Riffi.

LL *16038–44 = Best and O'Brien 1957: 518*

On a cold night they rowed upon the strait of the Red Sea.
They rowed past India, past Asia, so that you may know it.
To Scythia, with lofty strength, to their own country.
They held sway over the channel of the Caspian Sea, a trusty war band.
They left Glas in Coronis upon the Libyan Sea.
After a time Srú son of Esrú departed from Scythia on a difficult circuit, swiftly.
Around the north of the Rhipaean mountains.

trans. Carey 2006: 155

Ó Riain (2009: 33) and Clarke (2015) draw our attention to a version of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, written in or near Metz in Lotharingia towards the end of the tenth century as part of the *vita* for a Scottish saint named Cadróe (originally edited by Colgan 1645: 494–507).[6] Its author 'seems to have owed his knowledge of Irish places . . . to information emanating, most likely by word of mouth, from an ecclesiastic associated with Armagh and very possibly a member of the family then enjoying what F. J. Byrne has rightly described as a "tight grip" on Patrick's coarbship' (Ó Riain 2009: 45). Ó Riain further notes that 'while it may be no more than pure coincidence, the abbot holding the succession to Patrick in the period beginning in 1005, when the man who commissioned Cadróe's *vita* was still alive, was Máel Muire son of Eochaid úa Flainn, *fer léiginn*, "head teacher", of Armagh, whose verse has the distinction of being the most oft-quoted authority in the conventional versions of the *Lebor Gabála*.'

A version of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* presented by the Metz scribe in Cadróe's *vita* adopted the topographical detail available in Isidore (*Etymologies*, XIV.iii.38-43, XIV.vi.4, 7-8, 17, 28, 21, 14-16, 32, 40, 43-4) 'to chart the long sea-voyage from Asia Minor to Ultima Thule'

(Ó Riain 2009: 40). In this story, the Irish settlers travel past Patmos and Abydos and go on to Thrace. From there they go to the islands of Ephesus and Melos, then the islands of Cyclades across the Carpathian Sea, until they come upon Crete, and from there, 'hoping for a homeland of their own' (*vnde spe patriae*, Ó Riain 2009: 36), they arrive in Sicily, driven between Corsica and Sardinia, and approach the coastline of Liguria in a great storm. Their hope of survival is taken away from them, as the Metz scribe says, 'for not even Aeneas and Ulysses, who endured much, as histories relate, could have tolerated such things' (*nam neque Aeneas aut Vlisses, quos historiae tradunt plurima pertulisse, tanta perferre potuerunt*, Ó Riain 2009: 37).

The route of the Sons of Gáedel Glas, charted by the Metz scribe, is reminiscent of the journey made by Aeneas (the Gaels arrive in Sicily, then travel through the Mediterranean in a great storm), and a reference to the celebrated Trojan hero is included. As Helen Fulton has noted (2022: 352), the 'geography of Ireland's origin legend . . . has clear links with biblical and classical narratives of migratory peoples searching for a territory of their own. It is thus cognate with accounts of the travels of Trojan refugees from the east to the west, such as Aeneas's journey via Crete and Sicily as described in Virgil's *Aeneid*.' However, Ulysses is also mentioned, and the classical protagonists are presented as the two greatest travellers of the past.[7] This suggests that the Metz scribe comes very close to implying a parallel between the travels of the ancestors of the Irish and those of Aeneas, while also proclaiming that the Irish are 'Greek in language and stock and nation' (*linga et cultu nationeque Graeci*, Ó Riain 2009: 35). This implies that the two groups of people have a direct connection in terms of their linguistic, educational and genealogical origins.

The significance of Greece in Irish migrations histories: conclusions

In this chapter, I have charted the various stories of migrations available in the *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, as the foundational compilation of Irish history, with variant recensions dating from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries, and have highlighted the ways in which such stories were influenced by ancient Graeco-Roman historiographies and geographies. I have classified the origin legend frameworks available in *Lebor Gabála Érenn* according to three categories (Fall of Troy; New Israel; Table of Nations). In my necessarily brief survey of the migration stories of Cessair, Partholón, Nemed, the Fir Bolg and the Tuatha Dé Danann, I have suggested their connections with the classical tradition. The earlier ninth- and tenth-century Irish origin-legend was clearly dependant on presenting the Sons of Gáedel Glas as following in the footsteps of Aeneas and Ulysses, the great travellers of antiquity, while the twelfth-century versions of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* framed the ancestors of the Irish within the Table of Nations and the New Israel migration, connecting them with Moses, Magog, Japheth and Noah.

In the seventeenth-century recension, on the other hand, compiled by the four scribes instigated by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh, native Irish historiography was revisited along with the origins of the tribes that came to Ireland, presenting them as migrating from Greece and

surrounded by the mist of enigmatic legends that had been copied from earlier medieval manuscripts, now irretrievably lost.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Prof. Isabelle Torrance for her invitation to join the ERC research network on Classical Influences and Irish Culture leading to many stimulating discussions between 2020 and 2023, including the conference on the Irish Migrations and Classical Antiquity. I am grateful to Prof. Michael Clarke and Prof. John Carey for illuminating discussions of Isidore and *Lebor Gabála Érenn*. I would also like to acknowledge criticisms and suggestions expressed by the anonymous reviewers. All the remaining errors and omissions are my sole responsibility.
2. I follow Breatnach 2010 for the spelling of the names of the scribes who took part in Ó Cléirigh's initiative, including Míchéal Ó Cléirigh rather than Mícheál Ó Cléirigh, except where he has been referred to as Micheál by other authors cited. Breatnach 2010 is the only analysis to date available to discuss the development and the text of Ó Cléirigh's recension of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*. Useful remarks are also contained in Flahive 2009, to which Breatnach 2010 also refers.
3. The manuscripts are RIA 23 N 30 (485), NLI G 18, G 94 and G 296, TCD H 2.5 (1296), Maynooth M 40, M 66 and C 98 and Fermoy CF 16; see Scowcroft 1987: 84, n. 10. The manuscript Dublin RIA 23 M 70 was penned by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh himself, while RIA MS 23 K 32 (617) is a copy of the latter, made by Cú Choigcríche Ó Cléirigh (Carey 1993: 7–10; Scowcroft 1987: 83–5; 2009: 13–15; Breatnach 2010: 2–3). Two copies of the original version by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh are worth mentioning. Dublin, RIA MS D iii 3 (777), written by Eochaidh Ó hEoghusuidhe in 1647, is closely related to Dublin, TCD MS H. 1. 12 (1286), a mid-eighteenth-century transcript by Aodh Ó Dálaigh of a manuscript written by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh. Flahive's conclusion (2009: 79) that 'the text of Míchéal Ó Cléirigh's autograph is significantly compressed by comparison' with the autograph by Cú Coigcríche Ó Cléirigh does not have any significant bearing upon the discussion of the relevant portions of the Ó Cléirigh's recension of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* in this chapter.
4. I thank Michael Clarke for drawing my attention to the legend of Albina.
5. *Lebor Gabála Érenn* is encyclopaedic in nature, but could not of course embrace all the legends of the conquests of Ireland available. According to Clarke (2012: 15), it was complemented by *Sex Aetates Mundi* ('The Six Ages of the World'), as 'the two works share a preoccupation with the question of racial ancestry, one of the major scholarly problems of the literati in medieval Ireland'. And there are other stories of migrations telling of arrival of foreigners to Ireland. In one example from the early thirteenth-century source *Acallam na Senórach*, Becc the Mariner at Inbher Colptha, the River Boyne estuary near the Mellifont Abbey, was 'the son of the king of the Romans who came to conquer Ireland, until a flood-wave drowned him there' (trans. Carey 2017: 44, *mac ríg Rómán táinic do ghabháil Éireann co rus-báidh tonn tuile ann hé*, Stokes 1900: 2). This tale is not found in any of the surviving recensions of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, although it is similar in its outline to some other legends recounted therein.
6. Rodway (2010: 101) was not convinced one can refer to 'this interesting text as a version of *Lebor Gabála Éireann*'.
7. See Hillers (1996–7: 32), who discusses whether the *Aeneid* had any influence on the vernacular Irish genre of the voyage-literature, the *immrama*. *Pace* Eldevik (1984: 1), who

argued that the *Aeneid* enjoyed a unique prestige among classical texts in medieval Europe and particularly in Ireland, Hillers suggests that 'the *immrama* are closer to the *Odyssey* than to the *Aeneid*' (1996–7: 32). This view is also true of the way the travels of the Sons of Gáedel Glas are framed in various recensions of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*. A fleeting reference to Ulysses here does not recall 'the motif in the mainstream *Leabhar Gabhála* narrative where the ancestors sail past the Sirens' (Clarke 2015: 472), but rather associates Ulysses with Aeneas, whose wanderings are emulated in the narrative.

CHAPTER 5
TRACING A MACROBIAN DRAGON FROM OLD IRISH TO OLD NORSE

Mikael Males

In a recent article (Males 2022), I argued that specifically Irish perceptions of the Leviathan have influenced the motif of the Old Norse world-encircling serpent, the Miðgarðsormr ('serpent of middle-earth'). There, I focused on a thorough evaluation of indications to the effect that the borrowing had taken place, but I did not explore the dynamics of the cultural transfers involved in any detail. These include the blending of computistical and exegetical discourse, vernacularization of an exegetical motif and, finally, borrowing from one vernacular by another. Such an evaluation is the aim of the present chapter. In order for the chapter to stand on its own, however, I will also briefly review the main indications and elaborate some points further.

While Irish cultural and literary influence on Old Norse was considerable in the period *c.* 850–1000, it generally did not involve motifs derived from the classical or Judeo-Christian traditions. Such influences became important from the twelfth century onwards, but the source was then no longer Ireland, but rather England, Germany and France. Old Norse authors still took an interest in Ireland and the Gaelic-speaking area, but now as a thing of the past or as a land of wonders. By contrast, in the earlier period of close Norse–Irish contacts, the Nordic settlers were illiterate and predominantly pagan, and Irish literary influence then took the form of vernacular narrative motifs. Due to circumstance, therefore, the Irish reception of the classical past was for the most part barred from making the transition to the Old Norse-speaking sphere. I will here focus on an exception to this rule, which offers us the rare opportunity to explore how a classical motif may be transformed through vernacularization, oralization and even re-paganization. In order to do so, however, I must first address the remarkable survival of Old Norse literary works from the pre-literate period.

This state of affairs is so rare that the statement itself becomes an oxymoron: how can literary documents be pre-literate? Of course, they cannot, in the sense that the tradition was not borne by *litterae*, but all evidence suggests that the Old Norse poetic transmission from *c.* 850 onwards was more stable than later written transmission and that it thus had the characteristics of literature, even though the technology enabling such stability was not script, but metre.[1] Old Norse poetry remained a valuable export commodity from Iceland to the Norwegian court into the thirteenth century, and its value depended on the poets' unfaltering command of the poetic canon, some of which was then 300 to 400 years old. By this time the poets had also become authors, and thus preliterate, pagan poems made their way onto the parchment. This situation has no counterpart in the

European Middle Ages, and early Old Norse poetry must therefore be evaluated as in some respects having more in common with, for instance, archaic Greek poetry than with other medieval literature.[2]

For this reason, we have detailed knowledge, albeit in glimpses, of the characteristics of early Old Norse literature. Under favourable circumstances, this puts us in a position to evaluate the likelihood of external influence on a detailed level. Thus, for instance, we can date the earliest attested loanword from Irish to *c.* 850 (Males 2023a). Given the prominence of ecclesiastical learning in Ireland, there is no obvious reason why a motif originating in the sphere of such learning might not have made it through Irish–Norse bilingual mediators into the Old Norse tradition, although such a scenario would most likely be exceptional. The prerequisite would have to be that the motif in question had first been fully vernacularized in an Irish setting, since Nordic settlers would have had no means to make the first-hand acquaintance of Latin texts, nor would they most likely have been interested in doing so. I would suggest that this is exactly what has happened to a motif from the Psalms and that in addition, a much less likely candidate for vernacularization has entered the mix and travelled across the North Sea to Norway; namely, a motif from Macrobius' *Saturnalia*.

The Irish Leviathan

The first step on our journey is to trace the development of a peculiarly Irish Leviathan motif. Remarkably, the Irish tradition presents us with not one, but two, partly non-biblical versions of the Leviathan. The first of these sees the Leviathan as a world-encircling serpent, lying in the sea, biting its tail and, eventually, contributing to the conflagration of doomsday. The second also presents the Leviathan as lying in the sea, but the most important characteristic of this Leviathan is that its breathing creates the tides. In the following, I will focus on the world-encircling, tail-biting Leviathan, since this is the motif that appears to have been imported into Old Norse mythological narrative (on the tide-making Leviathan, see Bisagni 2025 and Males 2022: 167–73).

Before moving on, it should be noted that Anton Christian Bang and Jaqueline Borsje have suggested that the Irish tail-biting, world-encircling Leviathan, and in Bang's case even the Old Norse Miðgarðsormr, derive from Jewish tradition, since such a Leviathan is found there (Bang 1882; Borsje 1999: 272). Typologically, this argument is attractive, but we lack analogues to Jewish influence on early medieval religious motifs in the Latin West, and neither scholar points to plausible lines of transmission.[3] Within Jewish tradition, this motif appears to have developed in the early centuries CE, since it comes from an amalgam of the Leviathan and the Egyptian and Near-Eastern *ouroboros*, the tail-biting, world-encircling dragon symbolizing the world or the year. The considerable Jewish presence in, for instance, Alexandria would have facilitated the blend of the two most similar creatures in the Jewish and the Egyptian tradition. By contrast, there was no Jewish presence in the Gaelic-speaking sphere in the early Middle Ages, and no specifically Jewish texts have been identified. While acknowledging Bang and Borsje,

Jewish influence therefore does not seem a likely explanation of the Irish motif. Still, conflation with the *ouroboros* seems the most probable cause of the tail-biting Leviathan motif, since key aspects of this motif lack a counterpart in other Indo-European traditions than those discussed here.[4] The question then becomes whether descriptions of the *ouroboros* may have been transmitted to Ireland by some other route than Jewish influence. As we shall see, there is evidence of this, but let us first consider the sources for the Irish tail-biting and/or world-encircling Leviathan.

The earliest indication of a peculiarly Irish view on the Leviathan is found in the Hiberno-Latin gloss on the Psalms (*Glossa in psalmos*) of Codex Palatinus Latinus 68. The *Glossa* was compiled around 700, in Ireland or Northumbria, and the manuscript probably dates to the eighth century (McNamara 1986: 72–4; see also Sharpe 2010: 5–6). It contains twenty-five glosses in Irish and five in English (McNamara 1986: 19), and exhibits a number of features typical of Insular exegesis.[5] In Psalm 103, the dragon found in the psalm is glossed as the Leviathan (McNamara 1986: 214). This may strike us as odd, but in the exegetical tradition, the Leviathan was variously construed as a dragon, a great whale or fish, as the Devil, or as all of these at the same time. This interchangeability of Leviathan – dragon–whale/fish–Devil – is crucial for all developments outlined below.

In Psalm 73, the words *confrigisti caput draconis* ('you crushed the head of the dragon') are first glossed *secundum veritatem* ('according to truth'): *CONFRIGISTI CAPUT DRACONIS magni qui circumiit mundum: nisi enim prae* [for *pro*] *mortuo capite fecisses non potuissent homines habitare in terra* (McNamara 1986: 155) ('you CRUSHED THE HEAD of the great DRAGON which encircles the world. If you had not left him for dead [lit. 'for a dead head' – an expression coloured by the focus on the dragon's head in the verse], humans could not inhabit the earth').[6] Here we find the earliest instance of the dragon encircling the earth, and the gloss on Psalm 103 suggests a conflation of the dragon and the Leviathan. The passage is also interpreted *spiritaliter* ('spiritually'): *CAPUT DRACONIS, id est diabolus magnus; id est filius virginis capud serpentis contrivit* (McNamara, ed. 1986: 155) ('HEAD OF THE DRAGON, that is the great Devil, that is, the son of the virgin has crushed the head of the serpent'). Focus has here turned to Christ, who vanquished the Devil at the Crucifixion. Since both Christ and the Devil will return at the end time, this comment may suggest an eschatological perspective.

The tail-biting and/or world-encircling Leviathan is found in three other places. One is the tale *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* ('The Destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel'), composed in the Old Irish period (before *c.* 900). I quote the relevant passage according to *Lebor na hUidre* ('Book of the Dun Cow', *c.* 1100), fol. 85b:

> *Ním-thása a ṡamuil, acht manid talam imid-roe [gl. id est ro bris] nó manid in Leuidán timchella in ndomon ad-comaic a erball do thóchur in betha tar a chenn . . .*
>
> I have [i.e. know] not its likeness, if it be not the earth which has turned [gl. that is, 'which has broken'], or if it be not the Leviathan encircling the earth who has struck his tail to overturn the world . . .

While the fact that the world-encircling dragon is the Leviathan is implicit in the *Glossa*, here he is explicitly named. In addition, he is connected to the end of the world, which is common in exegetical literature, due to the equation of the Leviathan with the dragon in the Revelation of John. As noted above, the *Glossa* is also open to such an interpretation. In addition, there is a focus on the Leviathan's tail, which is relevant in comparison to the next item.

In the *Voyage of Saint Brendan* (*Navigatio sancti Brendani*), probably from the ninth century, Brendan and his monks land on an island and start to cook, but at that point the island starts to move, and the monks flee in terror. Informed by God, Brendan knew all along what kind of an island they had landed on, and had remained seated in the boat. When the monks join him and they set out, he tells them:

> *Insula non est ubi fuimus, sed piscis, prior omnium natantium in oceano. Quaerit semper suam caudam ut simul iungat capiti et non potest prae longitudine. Qui habet nomen Iasconius.*
>
> *Orlandi and Guglielmetti 2014: 28*

> It is not an island, where we were, but a fish, greatest of all things swimming in the ocean. It always seeks its tail, so that it may join it with its head, but it cannot because of [the tail's] length. Its name is Iasconius.

It is not entirely clear why the length of the tail would keep Iasconius from catching hold of it, but the logic may be that it is out of reach on the other side of the world. The point is clear enough, however: this fish is enormous and has a very long tail, which it is trying to bite. Its name is based on the Irish *íasc* (fish), which may perhaps be compared to Latin *coetus* (whale, big fish), often used of the Leviathan based on Isaiah. The name *Leviathan* is not used of Iasconius, however, and when it is found at another place in the *Navigatio*, it simply means 'the Devil' (Orlandi and Guglielmetti 2014: 92). Nonetheless, when compared to the *Glossa* and *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, there can be little doubt that we are dealing with a variety of the same motif (note, in particular, the detail about the tail in *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*).

Finally, a passage in Pseudo-Bede, *De mundi caelestis terrestrisque constitutione* ('On the creation of the celestial and earthly world'), combines the world-encircling, tail-biting strand with the tide-making one (mentioned above). The second is of limited importance here but may have some bearing on the 'twisted' nature of the Old Norse Miðgarðsormr (see below). In addition, I quote it to clarify the Insular background of the text. On the topic of earthquakes, the text reads:

> *Alii dicunt Leviathan animal terram complecti, tenetque caudam in ore suo, qui aliquando sole exustus, nititur illum comprehendere, sicque indignationis ejus motu terram quoque moveri.*
>
> *Pradel-Baquerre et al. 2016: 66*

> Others say that the animal Leviathan surrounds the earth, and it has its tail in its mouth. Sometimes when it is burnt by the sun, it strives to catch it, and thus by the indignation of his movement the earth also moves [that is, he causes earthquakes].

Somewhat later we read:

> *Alii dicunt habitationes nostras vicinas esse ori Leviathan, qui dum haurit fluctus, terra apparet; et dum remittit, obruitur.*
>
> *Pradel-Baquerre et al. 2016: 70*

> Others say that our habitations are close to the Leviathan's mouth, and when he drains the waves, the land appears; when he sends them back, it is covered.

This text was composed in the late eleventh or early twelfth century in southern Germany, probably at Tegernsee, Reichenau or St Gallen (Pradel-Baquerre et al. 2016: 15). The passage in question clearly has an insular background, however, as is evident from the statement that 'our habitations' are particularly affected by the tides, which is true of parts of Britain and Ireland, but not of southern Germany. We see here the traces of an Irish substrate where the world-encircling, tail-biting and tide-making aspects have all been combined. It is all but impossible to date this substrate exactly, but it is reasonable to assume that it reached southern Germany in the early period of Irish presence and before the *Schottenklöster*, sometime before *c.* 900–50, which is chronologically consistent with other sources mentioned above.[7]

Development of the motif: classical and late antique sources

In order for the motif of the *ouroboros* to have entered any level of Irish intellectual or narrative discourse, it must presumably have been transmitted by some Latin text used in Ireland. There exist four references to the *ouroboros* in late antique Latin literature: Claudian's poem *On Stilicho's Consulship* (*De consolatu Stiliconis*) II.427-30; Servius the Grammarian's commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid* 5.85; Martianus Capella's prosimetric work *On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (*De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*) 1.70; and Macrobius' *Saturnalia* I. 9, 12 (cf. O'Rorke, Chapter 2: 30, this volume, on the circulation of the *Saturnalia* in Ireland).[8]

Knowledge of Claudian's text in seventh-century Ireland is implausible (see, e.g., Orchard 1994: 152–3), and the text describes a serpent surrounding a cave, not the world. Knowledge of Servius' commentary on Virgil (in the version known as *Servius auctus*) may be regarded as certain, since it has fed into a commentary used by the St Gall glossator, and it also seems to have been transmitted in seventh-century England (see Hofman 1996: I: 70–3; II: 398–9; Lapidge 1996 (1988–9): 195). In Servius, however, the dragon symbolizes the year (as in Aeneas' seven *years* of error – the topic of the comment),

not the world: *Annus enim secundum Aegyptios indicabatur ante inventas litteras picto dracone caudam suam mordente quia in se recurrit* ('according to the Egyptians, the year used to be indicated before the invention of letters by drawing a dragon biting its tail, since it turns back to itself') (Thilo and Hagen 1881–4: I: 602). Knowledge of Martianus Capella is conceivable, but here, too, the dragon symbolizes the year: *praetendebat dextra flammivomum quendam draconem caudae suae ultima devorantem, quem credebant anni numerum nomine perdocere* ('[Jupiter's] right hand presented some fire-spewing dragon, devouring its tail, which they thought to teach the calculation of the year through its name') (Willis 1983: 22).

The fourth reference holds more promise. The first book of Macrobius' *Saturnalia* treats the Roman calendar and related material of religious or cultural interest. At one point, Macrobius discusses how Janus (as in the month of *January*) represents the world, turning around and always beginning and ending in itself. Importantly, Macrobius has just said that the world should be understood as the heavens. He writes:

> *Hinc et Phoenices in sacris imaginem eius exprimentes draconem finxerunt in orbem redactum caudamque suam devorantem, ut appareat mundum et ex se ipso ali et in se revolvi.*
>
> *Macrobius,* Saturnalia *I. 9, 12; Kaster I: 42*
>
> For this reason also, the Phoenicians, producing his image in their rites, shaped a dragon turned back into a circle and devouring its tail, in order that the world might appear to be nourished from itself and turn back to itself.

Since Janus/the world represent the heavens, revolving around the earth, we may here recognize the world-encircling, tail-biting dragon.

The lines of transmission of the *Saturnalia* to preserved manuscripts from ninth-century Francia are not clear. Earlier, in the sixth century, Cassiodorus quotes once from the *Saturnalia* in his *Exposition of the Psalms* (*Expositio psalmorum*). Otherwise, there is virtually no trace of the work (Holford-Strevens 2019: 6), with one notable exception. Sometime in the seventh century, a considerable part of the first book was abridged into a calendrical treatise in its own right. Here we find our crucial intermediary.

Bede used this treatise in his *The Reckoning of Time* (*De temporum ratione*). Featuring a discussion between a Roman senator Praetextatus and an Egyptian named Horus, who asks questions about the Roman calendar, Bede referred to this text as *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati* ('The Discussion of Chorus [= Horus] and Praetextatus'), apparently unaware of Macrobius' authorship (Holford-Strevens 2019: 6, n. 21). Our passage about the tail-biting dragon is not found in the *Disputatio*, however, and it therefore becomes important to consider where the excerpt was made, and where one may therefore presuppose knowledge of the first book of the *Saturnalia* in its entirety. Since Bede was not familiar with the text's connection to Macrobius, the *Saturnalia* is not likely to have been present at Wearmouth-Jarrow (Sharpe 2010: 3–4, 38). If it had been, one might have

assumed that it came from Italy, along with other books brought by the abbots Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrith (cf. Sharpe 2010: 38–9). If the *Saturnalia* was not found at Wearmouth-Jarrow, one must suspect that the excerpt reached Bede through the other conduit by which Latin learning entered Northumbria, namely Ireland.

Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has shown that the *Disputatio*, in all likelihood, came to Bede as part of a computistical compilation made *c.* 658–700 in southeastern Ireland (Ó Crónín 1983b and 2003). This suggests that the excerpts from the first book of the *Saturnalia* were made in Ireland, and that Macrobius' description of the *ouroboros* was known there during the second half of the seventh century. Irish scholars took a keen interest in both *computus* and exegesis in this period, and it is therefore not very surprising that we should find the first indication of the Macrobian Leviathan in a commentary on the Psalms, dating to *c.* 700. Presumably, Irish scholars explored Macrobius for information on *computus*, but in so doing, they noted the Leviathan-like motif and applied it to the description of the Leviathan. A possible reason for doing so may have been that they saw the description in Macrobius as a pagan prefiguration of the biblical description or, simply, that they found the world-encircling characteristic as appropriate to the Great Enemy, since the Leviathan was understood as an avatar for Satan.

Transfer into the vernacular

As we have seen, various elements of the motif are found in different texts. The fact that the Latin sources are of a technical or exegetic nature raises the question of how motifs found in such rarefied discourses could have made it into the vernacular, and even into saga texts. I believe that a clue to the answer may be found in the fact that the earliest reference is contained in a commentary on the Psalms, the *Glossa*. Apart from the Pater Noster and the Credo, the Psalter was the text most widely known in the early Middle Ages. Boys received their first training in Latin learning it by heart. This was of course primarily true of ecclesiastics, but these would have had Irish as their first language and held responsibility for the spiritual education of the people. In this manner, the texts that were most important to ecclesiastics became central in secular society as well. Thus, for instance, the 150 psalms of the Psalter were in Irish referred to as 'the three fifties', and this concept was so central to Irish spiritual life that it spread into saga narrative, where we find 'three fifties of spears', 'three fifties of warriors' and so forth (Boyle 2021: 84). The word *saltair* ('psalter') was even used to indicate the prestigious and truthful nature of secular compositions, such as the *Saltair Caisil* ('Psalter of Cashel'), a now lost but once famous manuscript containing genealogies and other material (McNamara 2000 (1983): 362–3).

It therefore seems likely that motifs from the Psalms would have had particularly good preconditions for making the transfer from ecclesiastical to secular discourse, and in *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, we see that this did in fact happen. The blending of biblical exegesis and a motif from a part of Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, that may not even have been

known after the seventh century, was a process in which only a few of the most scholarly monastics could partake. The resulting motif had powerful visual characteristics, however, and the Leviathan's world-encircling nature was highly appropriate for the greatest enemy of Creation. In spite of its rarefied origins, then, the motif was well suited for wide circulation.

Transfer to the North

Old Norse sources allow us to see that the constellation of elements in the description of the local eschatological serpent, the Miðgarðsormr, is so similar to that of the Irish Leviathan as to suggest that the image of the former took shape under the influence of the latter. In Old Norse sources, the Miðgarðsormr is a world-encircling, tail-biting serpent which will be one of the great enemies of the gods in the last conflagration, just like the Irish Leviathan. Other features are shared with the biblical Leviathan, such as the fact that God/a god (Þórr) will go fishing for it (Job 40:20) and smash its head in the waters. In Ireland, this constellation of elements was due to the blending of the Leviathan and the *ouroboros*, and indeed, the two were felt to be so similar that they were conflated also in another area where knowledge of both was present, namely in the Levantine Jewish tradition (world-encircling, tail-biting, but not eschatological). This constellation of elements is not found elsewhere, except for the Old Norse area. I now turn to a selective overview of the motif in the Old Norse poetic tradition.

Interestingly, some poets claim that Þórr killed the serpent, others that it escaped. The earliest attestation in Bragi (*c.* 850; see Males 2023b) describes Þórr's sighting of the Miðgarðsormr thus:

> Hamri fórsk í hœgri
> hǫnd, þás allra landa,
> œgir Ǫflugbarða,
> endiseiðs of kendi.
>
> *Gade 2017: 49*

> The terrifier of Ǫflugbarði (a giant, whose terrifier is Þórr) lifted the hammer in his right hand when he recognized the enclosing-fish of all lands.

We see here that the Miðgarðsormr is referred to as a fish that encloses all lands. In the next stanza, we learn that this 'fish' is in fact a serpent. A salient feature in Bragi's stanzas about Þórr's fishing for the Miðgarðsormr is the recurrent references to the twisted nature of the serpent. In stanza 1, he is a *reistr*, 'twisted thing'; in stanza 5 a *figura etymologica* describes him as a *hrokkin hrøkkváll*, 'twisted twisting-eel'; and in stanza 6 he is a *vrangr ægir*, 'a twisted terrifier'. We see his writhing movements also in the clearest depiction of Þórr and the Miðgarðsormr, namely the Altuna runestone (eleventh century).

Figure 5.1 The Altuna runestone, Uppland, Sweden (U 1161). Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm (photo: Bengt A. Lundberg).

By all appearances, the serpent's twisting will have a role to play at the end of time, since in the prophetic poem *Vǫluspá* (late tenth century), stanza 50, we read:

> . . . snýsk jǫrmungandr / í jǫtunmóði. / Ormr knýr unnir . . .
>
> *Neckel and Kuhn 1983: 11*

> . . . the great monster is twisting in giant-anger. The snake pushes the waves . . .

The thirteenth-century mythographer Snorri Sturluson interpreted this to mean that the sea would rush onto land, and such a catastrophic interpretation seems likely, since in surrounding stanzas the earth is ravaged by fire, the mountains moan and the heavens are torn apart (Faulkes 2005: 50).

Interestingly, the twisted nature of the Leviathan is merely suggested by the word *tortuosus*, 'winding', in Isaiah 27:1 but is otherwise not apparent in the Bible. In the Irish tradition, the situation is different. In *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, the Leviathan is expected to overturn the world, and in Pseudo-Bede, he causes both earthquakes and tides, although the last are caused by his swallowing and vomiting, rather than by his movements.

The Irish motif may have drawn inspiration from Isaiah's *tortuosus*, but this cannot explain the considerable emphasis on the consequences of his twisting and turning, and it seems clear that Irish reception of Isidore has some part to play in this development (Bisagni 2025: 28-33 and Males 2022: 172–3). Older local traditions may also have entered the mix. As a result, the Irish and the Norse motif share a characteristic that is not present in the biblical (or the Levantine Jewish) motif, and one which apparently developed in Irish reception, strengthening the case for Irish influence on the Old Norse motif.

In Bragi's sixth stanza, the serpent escapes, but in two other poems, Þórr smashes its head or the entire creature (Ulfr Uggason, *Húdrápa*; Gamli gnævaðarskald, *Poem about Þórr*). The tension between the destruction and survival of the Leviathan, found for instance in the *Glossa* on the Psalms, is thus also present in the Old Norse tradition.

As noted above, the motif is first attested in the poet Bragi (*c.* 850), and it is more than a little noteworthy that he also uses the first attested Irish loanword, *lung* ('ship'), borrowed from the Irish *long*. More than two centuries after Bragi's day, the study of biblical texts would see their faint beginning in the Old Norse area, whereas texts describing the *ouroboros* would not be studied there at all during the Middle Ages. It is therefore unlikely that the motif of a world-encircling, tail-biting serpent for which God/a god goes fishing, and which has eschatological significance, is due to independent Old Norse conflation of the Leviathan and the *ouroboros*. In any event, such a conflation could not explain the shared emphasis on the violent movements of the Irish Leviathan and the Miðgarðsormr. It therefore seems likely that key aspects of the Miðgarðsormr motif have been shaped by Irish influence.

This assumption is compatible with an onomastic observation, namely that the two attested designations for the Miðgarðsormr – *Miðgarðsormr* ('snake of the middle enclosure = the inhabited world') and *Jǫrmungandr* ('great monster' or possibly 'great staff', a snake being shaped like a staff) – are transparent and descriptive, whereas old names have often lost their descriptive characteristic due to a lack of transparency. This is true of all other members of the Miðgarðsormr's family that are attested in early poetry: his father Loki and his siblings Hel and Fenrir. When poets refer to plausibly old mythological creatures, transparent, descriptive compounds tend to be circumlocutions, such as, for example, *Hárbarðr*, 'greybeard', or *Bǫlverkr*, 'causer of harm', for Óðinn, but in the case of the Miðgarðsormr, there seems to be no underlying older name for which the descriptive compounds might serve as a substitution.

In addition, kennings for members of the family consisting of Loki, Hel, Fenrir and the Miðgarðsormr are nearly always based on their familial ties to each other, such as *ulfs faðir*, 'father of the wolf = father of Fenrir = Loki' or *Loka mær*, 'Loki's daughter = Hel'. There are numerous such kennings in early poetry, and yet the Miðgarðsormr does not

appear in any of them before the end of the tenth century, more than a century after his appearance in Bragi (the earliest such reference is found in *Þórsdrápa* (late tenth century), where Loki is called *faðir lǫgseims*, 'father of the water-ribbon' = Miðgarðsormr). This is consistent with a borrowed monster, which did not at first have a clear genealogical place among the prominent Old Norse mythological creatures. Onomastics and the representation of familial ties in early poetry thus support the contention that the Miðgarðsormr is, in fact, a newcomer.

How, then, might such a borrowing have taken place? I believe that a clue may be found in the loan *long* > *lung*. This word is hardly a true loanword, since it is only found in the contrived skaldic discourse, and the flow of nautical terminology generally went in the opposite direction – from Scandinavia to Ireland. Rather, it is most likely used to add local colour, presupposing that Bragi's listeners, being a group of warriors who shared experiences 'west of the sea', would recognize this Irish word. In other words, a degree of awareness of things Irish would have served as a marker of communal, elite identity, and Bragi's poetry is overall so complex that it must have been intended for such a limited, elite group.

The borrowing of a literary/mythological motif goes deeper than this mere substitution of one word for another, but it may be less different than first meets the eye, since the Leviathan/Miðgarðsormr is the greatest of all beasts in the ocean. As such, it too has a natural place in nautical discourse, albeit of a less practical nature, and it is thereby a plausible object of early Irish–Norse cultural exchange. Its full vernacularization, indicated by the passage of *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* quoted above, shows us that the motif quickly spread far outside the exegetical discourse in Ireland. This makes it likely that the motif would have been known to Irish individuals who had developed ties to the Nordic community. The Norsemen came across the sea to Ireland and remained oriented towards the ocean. Their poetry is obsessed with sea imagery; examples are too numerous to mention. It therefore seems plausible that they would eagerly have embraced the Irish Leviathan motif. For all these reasons, the transfer of this motif to the North is perhaps less strange than it might seem at first glance.

A northward oral migration of Irish monastic learning: conclusions

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, while Irish reception and transmission of classical and Judeo-Christian literature exerted a profound influence in many parts of Europe, historical circumstance generally barred this influence from reaching the North, at least directly. This chapter has focused on a rare exception, which may be traced due to felicitous clues in Irish transmission and the exceptional state of preservation of oral Old Norse poetry. Nonetheless, I believe that the topic may be more useful to us than simply serving as a curious exception. One asset is the fact that the study of textual transmission is predicated on the study of written texts, and its conclusions are therefore mainly valid for individuals involved in textual production and subsequent written transmission. In the topic under study, written texts remain the access point, but since

the Nordic invaders of the ninth and tenth century were for practical purposes illiterate (their knowledge of runes is irrelevant in this context), the transfer of knowledge must necessarily have been oral. This is a rare opportunity, and it is interesting to note which features make a motif from classical literature 'fit for survival' in such a context. In this instance, I would suggest that the motif's highly visual characteristics and narrative potential may have been key (see Figure 5.1 above).

At least as interesting is the internal Irish transformation and dissemination of the motif. First of all, it is noteworthy that a motif encountered in the study of *computus* could easily be imported into exegetical discourse. While perhaps not surprising, since the groups of individuals working on such a high level of scholarship would presumably have been small, it is far from self-evident that the two should inform each other in this manner. The big leap, however, is surely the transfer from a restricted discourse in Latin found in Macrobius' *Saturnalia* to wide vernacular dissemination. Here, it would seem that the 'liminal' status of the Psalms, being the most widely revered and known Latin textual entity of any length, may have made them into a carrier of the motif, from the cloister into the sphere of vernacular narrative.

In short, the exceptional character of this case study allows us to discern dynamics that must in most instances remain invisible, due to the limitations of our sources. Typological studies of the spread of motifs generally do not evaluate the dynamics by which these were spread, but the fact remains that all such dissemination relies on socio-cultural circumstance and meetings between individuals. The rare instances where we can produce a fairly detailed scenario of the dynamics of oral transmission are therefore valuable for a holistic analysis of cultural interaction in the past.

Notes

1. This is evident in a number of ways, whereof three may suffice here. First, different categories of early linguistic forms correlate with each other, as well as with the dates of the poets, when these are known (see, e.g., Myrvoll 2014; Haukur Þorgeirsson 2012 and 2016). Second, poets aimed to use unique kennings, and this characteristic remains in the written corpus, meaning that the long oral transmission has resisted simplification and analogy (Wills 2021). Third, scribes often failed to grasp the intended meaning when copying poetry, and in the transmission of prose, they took greater liberties than oral transmission of poetry had ever admitted (Males 2023a).
2. Among an earlier generation of scholars, it was not uncommon to assume that some Old Irish poetry had been preserved from the pagan period, but this view is tenuous at best. See, e.g., Breatnach 1984 and McCone 1996: 20–1.
3. I am not aware of any plausible instances of decisive Jewish influence on a motif or on interpretation after Jerome and before *c.* 1100, even if it may be true, for instance, that Theodulf of Orléans collaborated with a Jew in his revision of the Vulgate (if this is not simply a topos taken over from Jerome, who was known to have consulted Jewish informants). The most noteworthy instance from the twelfth century is that Richard of St Victor wrote *De Emmauele* to refute Andrew of St Victor's view that the virgin who will bear Emmanuel in Isaiah 7.14 does not refer to Mary and Christ, in direct contradiction of Matthew 1.22-3.

If it is true, as Richard claims, that Andrew arrived at this conclusion through discussion with a Jewish rabbi, then, finally, we have an instance of decisive Jewish influence, but only by one individual and long after the relevant period.

4. By way of illustration, there is no comparable motif in Watkins 1995 or Ogden 2013.
5. McNamara 1986: 75. McNamara speaks specifically of Irish features, but this topic has been the subject of a long debate, and 'Insular' is probably a better designation. For overviews, see Ó Cróinín 2000; Coltreni 2022.
6. All translations in this chapter are my own.
7. On Irish manuscripts in Tegernsee, Reichenau and St Gallen, see, for instance, Sharpe 2010: 26–7, 33 n. 106, 34, 36–7, 40. On the Irish presence in St Gallen, see Richter 2002.
8. See Orlandi and Guglielmetti 2014: 136. The occurrence in Martianus Capella is omitted there and was pointed out to me by Michael Clarke.

PART II
EARLY MODERN IRELAND: POLITICS OF TRAVEL AND EXILE

CHAPTER 6
'FOR OTHERS PERGAMUM HAS BEEN OVERTHROWN; FOR ME ALONE IT STILL STANDS': REFLECTIONS ON CONQUEST AND MIGRATION IN NEO-LATIN HISTORIES OF IRELAND

Feliks Levin[1]

Refuting English domination of Ireland

The seventeenth century was a turbulent period in the history of Ireland. As a result of the early modern English conquest, the Irish political and social landscape underwent dramatic changes. Due to the Reformation, colonial plantations, dispossession and civil wars (1579–1603; 1641–53), the Catholic Irish sought refuge in Continental Europe. In their writings they reflected on the past and present of Ireland through the lenses of migration and conquest, rejecting the views of their English opponents on the status of Ireland and its people, and reflecting on their position as exiles. In doing so, they frequently evoked sources and models from Graeco-Roman antiquity, as discussed in this chapter. Before we turn to these, with a particular focus on Philip O'Sullivan Beare (1590–1660) and John Lynch (*c.* 1599–*c.* 1677), I will sketch out the complex contemporary political scene which produced or inspired the classical analogies.

Seventeenth-century Irish Catholic authors contested English imperial discourse about Ireland, which was based on two texts written by the twelfth-century historian Gerald of Wales (Giraldus Cambrensis) – *Expugnatio Hibernica* ('Conquest of Ireland') and *Topographia Hibernica* ('Topography of Ireland') – both widely known across England, Ireland and Continental Europe. Gerald of Wales legitimized the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, representing the island as an ancient appendage of the English crown and a proper territory for colonization. In the early modern period Gerald's portrayal of the native population as 'barbarous', and in need of being 'civilized', was instrumental in justifying the English reform of Ireland, and the confiscation of power from the native Irish elites (Morgan 1999; McKibben 2015; Kane 2018).

Irish authors fervently refuted the charges of barbarity laid against their people, generating a new industry of works defending Irish culture and history for two purposes. First, they contested the dominant narrative justifying the alienation of Old English and Gaelic Catholic elites from land and power. Second, as emigrés, they were also concerned with restoring the symbolic prestige of the Irish in Europe. In Continental Europe, Gerald's negative portrayal of the Irish was disseminated in Abraham Ortelius' atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* ('Theatre of the Lands of the World', 1573), in which the

description of the Gaelic Irish population supplemented the map of Ireland (Ortelius 1601: 16r), and in William Camden's editions of *Topographia Hibernica* and *Expugnatio Hibernica* published in Frankfurt in 1602 (Harris 2009: 136). In a competitive culture of early modern humanist historical writing, it was important to secure the standing of one's nation in the order of precedence of 'civilized' nations, and to defend its honour against foreign incursions (Hirschi 2012: 88–103).

Irish exiles (some of whom later returned to Ireland) of both Old English and Gaelic backgrounds thus created a Catholic counternarrative of Irish history, which depicted Ireland as an island of saints and scholars, with the Gaels a 'civilized' people since the pagan period, equal, if not superior, to the English (Canny 2021: 29–59). They insisted on the continuing commitment of the Gaels to the faith established by Saint Patrick, in order to contest any religious foundations for the medieval Anglo-Norman conquest. This refuted Gerald, according to whom Pope Adrian had granted Henry II the right to conquer Ireland on the grounds of the religious ignorance of the Irish (Cambrensis 1867: 316–18).

Detailed Latin-language critiques of Giraldus Cambrensis' works, and those of his followers, can be found in a number of different texts, including *Apologia pro Hibernia adversus Cambri Caluminas* ('Apology for Ireland against the calumnies of Cambrensis', 1616) by the Old English Jesuit priest and academic Stephen White (1574–1646); *Historiae Catholicae Iberniae Compendium* ('A Compendium of the Catholic History of Ireland', 1621); an unpublished manuscript *Zoilomastix* ('The Scourge of Zoilos', 1625–6), composed by Gaelic noble Philip O'Sullivan Beare (1590–1660), discussed further below; and *Cambrensis Eversus* ('Cambrensis Refuted', 1662), written by the Old English priest John Lynch (1599–1677), who will be our main focus later in the chapter. The most important refutation of Gerald of Wales in the Irish language, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* ('Foundation of Knowledge on Ireland', 1634–5), was written by the Old English priest and historian Geoffrey Keating (1580–1644).

Despite shared dissatisfaction with English rule in Ireland, the aforementioned authors demonstrated a variety of opinions regarding the legitimacy of the Stuart dynasty and the future of Ireland as a subject to the British monarchy. For example, Keating and Lynch recognized the Stuarts' sovereignty over Ireland, but demanded the political emancipation of Irish Catholics in recognition of their loyalty to the ruler in secular affairs. Conversely, O'Sullivan Beare did not accept Stuart claims to the Irish throne. The Irish Catholic ecclesiastical, secular and learned elites were also divided on the issue of the 'Irishness' of the Old English population (on Irish identity, see Ó Buachalla 1993; Caball 1998a; Bradshaw 2015: 57–114). Early modern Ireland was an ethnically diverse country populated by the Gaels (also referred to as 'Irish' in this chapter), a native community in Ireland; the Old English, descendants of medieval Anglo-Norman invaders; the New English settlers in Ireland, coming from England since the 1530s; the Scots; and the Welsh. The question of ethnic descent was politicized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in relation to land ownership, office-holding, secular and religious loyalties and cultural allegiances. The emergent historical works lent legitimacy to a newly imagined alliance between the Gaelic Irish and the Old English. However, ethnic divisions and the prospects of rapprochement between the indigenous population and

the descendants of the medieval Anglo-Norman invaders remained contested topics in Irish circles (Campbell 2013: 41–51, 113–33).

Issues of migration and conquest were central to seventeenth-century Irish historical narratives, and were crucial also to the origin myth of the Gaels recorded in the medieval *Lebor Gabála Érenn* ('The Book of Invasions of Ireland') as discussed by Blanco Ríos and Fomin (Chapters 3 and 4, this volume). *Lebor Gabála* inspired early modern ethnic discourse in the Irish language (Caball 1998b: 114–31; Cunningham 2004: 105–40). Geoffrey Keating, for example, borrowed the theme of exile and settlement from *Lebor Gabála* as a structuring principle for his *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*. Unlike Keating, however, O'Sullivan Beare and Lynch did not rely much on the vernacular discourse of migration and conquest. Instead, they adopted other representational forms for depicting the past and present of Ireland for contemporary audiences, several of which were derived from classical literature, history and rhetorical treatises.

This chapter will be concerned with the Greek and Roman paradigms in Philip O'Sullivan Beare's *A Compendium of the Catholic History of Ireland* (henceforth *Compendium*) and *Zoilomastix*, and in John Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus*. O'Sullivan Beare and Lynch often presented conquests, and the two kinds of migration they engendered (the migration of colonists and the forced exile of the native population), through classical allusions. Issues of Irish identity, moreover, are also expressed through Graeco-Roman models in these authors.

Philip O'Sullivan Beare and John Lynch: a comparative overview

Philip O'Sullivan Beare was born in 1590 into a noble Gaelic landowning family in southwest Munster. His family was dispossessed after the defeat of the Irish army at the Battle of Kinsale (1602), and O'Sullivan Beare emigrated to Spain. There he was educated at the University of Santiago de Compostela (O'Donnell 1960: viii–x). He served in the Spanish army and died in Spain but never renounced his claim to his Irish titles and lands, which he left to his twelve-year-old daughter in his will. In his *Compendium* and *Zoilomastix*, O'Sullivan Beare discredited statements on Irish history and culture made by Gerald of Wales, and repeated by the Old English historian and Beare's contemporary Richard Stanihurst (1547–1618). O'Sullivan Beare presented an overview of Irish history, focusing particularly on the ancient history of Ireland, the Anglo-Norman conquest, the Elizabethan tyranny in Ireland and Catholic resistance to it. He attributed the defeat of Irish Catholics in the Nine Years War (1593–1603) to the ethnic divisions in the Catholic camp: only the Gaels fought for the faith, whereas the Old English mainly supported Elizabeth. In spite of the failure of the Spanish expedition in Ireland, O'Sullivan Beare still hoped for a new Spanish intervention that would restore Catholicism. He promoted these ideas in *Compendium*, which he dedicated to the Spanish king Philip IV. In *Zoilomastix*, O'Sullivan Beare continued engaging critically with the arguments of Gerald of Wales and Stanihurst.

John Lynch was born in Galway *c.* 1599 into an Old English family. Like O'Sullivan Beare, he also obtained his education overseas. He studied at the Catholic colleges of Douai, Dieppe and Rouen, but later returned to Ireland where he was made an archdeacon of Tuam in 1631 (D'Ambrières and Ó Ciosáin 2003: 51). During the Irish Confederate Wars (1641–53) Lynch may have represented a peace party within the Confederation of Kilkenny organized by the Irish Catholic forces in 1642. The main aim of the party was to achieve a quick reconciliation with the king (Ó Siochrú 2008: 18–19). Lynch supported a 1649 peace treaty (Campbell 2008: 134) signed between Irish Confederates and the Marquis of Ormond, which did not satisfy the radical faction of the Confederates who demanded more religious concessions. During the Cromwellian invasion of Ireland, Lynch supported the surrender of Galway to the Parliamentarian troops. After the end of the siege, he was expelled from Ireland as a priest (Campbell 2008: 42), and moved to France for the second time, where he spent the rest of his life (D'Ambrières and Ó Ciosáin 2003: 51). Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus*, spanning a lengthy period of Irish history, from the earliest time to the events of the Confederate Wars, was a detailed refutation of Gerald's writings. At the time of its publication in 1662, it was the only refutation of Giraldus Cambrensis which had appeared in print. Lynch's work targeted Irish secular and ecclesiastical circles, responding to contemporary debates about the sovereignty of the Irish kingdom, the legitimacy of the Stuarts, the reasons for the collapse of the Confederation of Kilkenny, and ownership of the Irish Catholic Church (Campbell 2008: 24). *Cambrensis Eversus* implicitly advocated the Confederate peace party and attached Irish identity to the Old English, whose loyalty to the Confederate cause had been questioned by their Gaelic co-religionists on the basis of their ethnic descent. The work was printed not long after the restoration of the Stuart king Charles II in 1660, who was its dedicatee. Moderate Irish Catholics at home and abroad hoped that the new king would restore their lands and grant them freedom to exercise their religion (Gillespie 2006: 221, 231; Ó Siochrú 2008: 270). Such expectations permeate Lynch's narrative, which represents Irish Catholics as loyal to their king, regardless of their background (Campbell 2008: 172).

O'Sullivan Beare and Lynch deliberately wrote in Latin to address an educated European audience misinformed by Gerald (Carroll 2001: 126; Greaney 2022: 66, 71). Their university educations ensured that they were highly skilled at writing in Latin and acutely aware of the classics (on university education cf. Beylard 1950: 203–6; Mollat 1955: 526–9). The contextualization of Irish history within the Graeco-Roman past was thus naturally incorporated into their presentation of migration and conquest. A number of scholars have studied some discrete ways in which O'Sullivan Beare and Lynch engaged with classical material. Clare Carroll observes that O'Sullivan Beare frames the tragedy of Irish exiles and his own experience through quotations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in *Compendium*. O'Sullivan Beare, she argues, compares himself to Ovid, highlighting his status as an exile and as a writer 'aware of his powerful role in creating memory of history through writing' (Carroll 2001: 121–2). Carroll draws attention to the Trojan allusion in *Compendium*, also derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which enables O'Sullivan Beare to liken the Irish to the Trojan exiles and to hint at their

imperial destiny. Like Troy, Ireland is devastated, and like the Trojans, the Irish are seeking refuge in another (Spanish) empire (Carroll 2001: 123).

Ian Campbell and Nienke Tjoelker, concentrating mainly on Lynch's *Alithinologia* ('A True Discourse', 1664) and *Supplementum Alithinologiae* ('An Extension of the True Discourse', 1667), have convincingly demonstrated that Ciceronian humanism influenced Lynch's style (Tjoelker 2010: 51) and his concept of an honour-based society, using the medium of classical politics to defend Irish Catholic subjects as virtuous citizens (Campbell 2008: 115–36). Campbell has also shown how Lynch adopted an anti-Aristotelian position, filtered through the theory of sovereignty espoused by the French political philosopher Jean Bodin (1530–96), who argued that sovereignty could not be divided. Lynch instrumentalized this theory to object to resistance against Charles I and Charles II (Campbell 2008: 153–78).

Scholarship on O'Sullivan Beare and Lynch has otherwise largely overlooked how both authors exploited classical models to present the English conquest of Ireland in a particular mode. I argue that being schooled in the humanist tradition, which attached importance to *exempla* and analogies for both literary and substantive effect (Mack 2014), O'Sullivan Beare and Lynch exploited classical sources to make the Irish past and present more intelligible to European readers, or to 'Europeanize' it. Developing Carroll's observations on the significance of Ovid for O'Sullivan Beare, I demonstrate how Trojan motifs are exploited in his *Compendium* to depict the devastated condition of Ireland after defeat in the Nine Years War, and to prophesy her resurrection in the Spanish Empire (see further Campbell, Chapter 7, this volume, on Irish Catholic support for the Spanish Empire).

Lynch, on the other hand, exploited the cultural capital of classical history to portray English empire-building as unreasonably oppressive, and to suggest more humane alternatives inspired by ancient Greek, Macedonian and Roman governance. Although critical of English conquest, Lynch nevertheless associated the future of Ireland with the British monarchy, comparing the island to long-suffering Penelope, in order to highlight the moral irreproachability of Irish Catholics and their unswerving loyalty to the Stuart kings. Unlike Keating, who legitimized the Irish identity of the Gaels and Old English on the basis of references to Gaelic sources and concepts (Bradshaw 1993: 178–86), Lynch formulated Irish identity with the help of classical models. Evoking Roman precedents of alliances between colonists and indigenous populations, and Roman concepts of *patria* and citizenship, Lynch justified the claims of the Old English to be considered indigenous Irishmen. In *Cambrensis Eversus*, moreover, Lynch modelled himself on the exiled Cicero.

I now turn to a closer reading of the classical references in O'Sullivan Beare and Lynch. The discussion will centre on three significant aspects of O'Sullivan Beare's *Compendium* and *Zoilomastix*, namely the motif of Ireland as Troy; O'Sullivan Beare's self-identification as Ovid; and the metaphor of Circe's cup. I will then discuss Lynch's exploitation of classical models in the following guises: ancient models of tyrannical governments; benevolent models of ancient empires; Roman concepts of citizenship; Ireland as Penelope; and Lynch's self-representation as Cicero.

Ireland as Troy in O'Sullivan Beare

As discussed by Gregory Darwin in Chapter 8 of this volume, casting Ireland as Troy was a common motif in seventeenth-century Irish-language political exile poetry (cf. also Ó Cathnia 1984: 124, 133–4; Darwin 2021: 207–13). In his Latin *Compendium*, O'Sullivan Beare adopts a similar strategy of creating analogies between Troy and Ireland.

Troy figures first, for instance, in the list of war-ravaged ancient sites adduced as comparanda to the devastated state of Ireland, including Carthage, Thebes and Athens (O'Sullivan Beare 1621: 55v). The cultural decline of Ireland as a result of conquest, which O'Sullivan Beare laments, alongside physical destruction, is thus situated in the context of universal history in a direct line to Troy.

He returns to the Trojan motif in evoking the so-called 'Flight of the Earls', notably Hugh O'Neill (1550–1616) and Rory O'Donnell (1575–1608), to Continental Europe in 1607, following their defeat by English forces. While describing Ireland devastated and ravaged after the war, O' Sullivan Beare quotes from Virgil's *Aeneid* (at O'Sullivan Beare 1621: 201r).

> Who has the words to tell that night's disaster?
> And who to tell the deaths? What tears could equal our sorrow [*dolorem*]?
> An ancient city falls
> that ruled for many years; through streets and houses
> and on the sacred thresholds of the gods
> so many silent bodies lie about.
> Nor are the Teucrians the only ones
> to pay the penalty of blood: at times
> new courage comes to beaten hearts, and then
> the Danaan victors die; and everywhere
> are fear, harsh grief, and many shapes of slaughter.
>
> Aeneid *2.361-9; trans. adapted from Mandelbaum 1971: 41*

The passage marks the beginning of Aeneas' account of his last night at Troy when the Greeks were released from the Trojan horse and burned Troy to the ground. Virgil portrays the downfall of Troy as a tragedy on an epic scale (Rossi 2001: 243); in just one night the past glory of Troy is annihilated by deaths and terror (Rossi 2001: 238–9). Aeneas testifies to the impossibility of expressing the pain of the sack of Troy. At the same time, the passage describes a moment when the Trojans, in the face of certain death, nevertheless choose to cause as much damage as possible to their attackers. The quotation thus articulates feelings of bereavement and pain (Carroll 2001: 122), and it is notable that O'Sullivan Beare's text quotes the variant *dolorem* ('sorrow') for the more conventional *labores* ('toils').[2] The heroism and martyrdom of the Irish is praised by analogy, as they manage, like the Trojans, in similarly adverse circumstances, to inflict significant damage on their conquerors.

The quotation appears towards the end of *Compendium*, and thus provides a classical frame for the war between the Irish and the English, suggesting the epic scale of the defeat of Irish Catholics. Through the poignant line *urbs antiqua ruit, multos dominata per annos* ('An ancient city falls that ruled for many years'), the accomplishments of the Irish in the remote past enumerated earlier in the *Compendium* are evoked, in contrast to the present desolation. Like the Gaelic nobility, the defeated Trojans will likewise sail into exile (cf. Leerssen 1986: 216–20, 225–9 and Caball 2018: 425–6 on the issue of the forced exile of the Gaelic elite).

For O'Sullivan Beare in his *Compendium,* the image of Troy has a twofold significance representing both devastation and imperial destiny. In the Middle Ages and early modern period, the downfall of Troy was associated with the migration of empires and their re-emergence elsewhere (Yates 1993: 114–17, 130–1; Pagden 1998: 25–6; O'Sullivan 2019: 190–3). The famous line from Virgil's *Aeneid* predicting the Trojans as founding a future Roman 'empire without end' (*imperium sine fine*, 1.279) was used, for instance, in an equestrian portrait of King Philip IV of Spain (Ruiz Fernández 2020: 55–7), to whose Catholic empire O'Sullivan Beare thought Ireland might productively be assimilated (concerning these plans cf. Morgan 2009: 101). The devastation of Ireland, in this context, prefigures its future resurrection, in O'Sullivan Beare's projection, as part of the Spanish empire. O'Sullivan Beare thus evokes Troy to define the past, present and future of Ireland and its Catholic exiles in the context of the rise and decline of the empires. Troy serves as an allegory for the contemporary desolation of Ireland at the hands of foreign conquerors and the disappearance of its former glory. At the same time, it anticipates the establishment of a new homeland for the exiles and for reincarnation within a new Catholic empire, thus giving hope to O'Sullivan Beare and his banished compatriots.

Circe's cup and Irish identity

In *Zoilomastix*, O'Sullivan Beare turned his attention to the commonplace classically-inspired metaphor of Circe's cup, used by Tudor and early Stuart English writers in relation to Irish culture (Carroll 2001: 57–9). According to English intellectuals, Irish culture corrupted the English in a manner comparable to the potion Circe offered Odysseus and his crew in *Odyssey* 10, which turned them into swine. Irish culture was similarly deemed capable of transforming the English into barbarians and depriving them of all Englishness and civility. The metaphor of Circe's cup thus served to legitimize cultural separation and the disenfranchisement of the native population (Carroll 2001: 1).

O'Sullivan Beare inverts this metaphor to claim that English culture contributed to the degeneracy of the Irish. Refuting Richard Stanihurst, who employed the metaphor to criticize cultural exchange between the Old English and the Gaels (Holinshed 1807–8: 69), O'Sullivan Beare proposes that English manners in fact represent a Circe's cup:

> Stanihurst told that the ancient Irish had forgotten the customs of English civility and had become degraded as if by [drinking from] Circe's cup. In these lines, if the

> civility of the English (although Stanihurst did not have them in mind) is called Circe's cup, it will be rightly done. For it is said that Circe, the queen of sorceries, was most skilled in witchcraft, and that she turned men into monsters by [offering] poisoned cups. Thus the false, counterfeited, barbarous manners of the English, inhospitable, poisonous, illusionary to Christian piety, to the worship of God, to the veneration of the saints, [which] changes men skilled in knowledge of faith and divinity into heretical beasts.
>
> Zoilomastix *326v–327r, O'Donnell ed. 1960: 67; trans. adapted from Campbell 2013: 92*

For O'Sullivan Beare, Circe's cup represents a dangerous English attraction to heresy which transforms the mind and soul of a person. He firmly believed in the superiority of Irish culture, which, he proposed, explained the failure of the attempted anglicization of Ireland. Giving the example of the Roman Empire, O'Sullivan Beare posited that subjected nations should adopt the culture of their conquerors only if it was more sophisticated (*Zoilomastix* 327v, O'Donnell ed. 1960: 68).

Self-representation: O'Sullivan Beare as Ovid

In his *Compendium*, as mentioned briefly above, O'Sullivan Beare models himself on the exiled Roman poet Ovid, famously banished by the emperor Augustus for politically motivated reasons, characterized by him as a 'song and an error' (*Tristia* 2.207; cf. Carroll 2001: 121). It was also well known that Ovid died in exile. Although O'Sullivan Beare was not a poet, in the preface to *Compendium* he compares himself with Ovid, inserting an excerpt from one of Ovid's exile poems, *Tristia* 5.12.11-16:

> *Des, licet, in valido pectus mihi robore fultum.*
> *fama refert Anyti quale fuisse reo,*
> *Fracta cadet tantae sapientia mole ruina:*
> *Plus valet humanis viribus ira Dei.*
> *Ille senex dictus sapiens ab Apolline nullum*
> *Scribere in hoc casu sustinuisset opus.*
>
> *O'Sullivan Beare 1621: 1r*

> You may give me a heart supported by the mighty power which they say he possessed who was accused by Anytus [i.e. Socrates], but wisdom will fall with a crash under the mass of such a mighty ruin, for the wrath of a god overpowers human strength. That famous old man, called a sage by Apollo, would have had no power in this misfortune to write a single work.
>
> *trans. Wheeler 2015: 253*

In this poem, Ovid responds to his friend's request to continue writing, and laments his poetic decline as a result of exile and isolation from his native land, friends and literary culture. In the excerpt quoted, the poet complains that even Socrates would not be able to write anything if he was in his place. Did Ovid know that Socrates wrote nothing down (cf. Green 2005: 289)? Did O'Sullivan Beare know? That is unclear. But by quoting Ovid in this way, O'Sullivan Beare encourages the reader to consider how exile impacts an author's ability, and also perhaps his desire, to record contemporary history. The quotation from *Tristia* in the preface, then, is an early modern convention in humility, particularly important in the Catholic tradition, where humility counteracts the deadly sin of pride (cf. Clement 2015: 1–7). Casting oneself as Ovid in an early modern context, moreover, was a common signifier for the loss of homeland and cultural identity (Williams 2002: 340–9; Hexter 2007: 210–14; cf. Hexter 2002: 416–24 on the medieval period).

O'Sullivan Beare also expresses optimism, in the same preface, about his ability to preserve the memory of Ireland, again citing Ovid – this time his *Letters from the Black Sea* (4.8.47-56):

> *Carmine fix vivax virtus, expersque sepulchri*
> *Notitiam serae posteritatis habet.*
> *Tabida consumit ferrum, lapidemque vetustas,*
> *Nullaque res maius tempore robur habet.*
> *Scripta ferunt annos: scriptis Agamemnona nosti;*
> *Et quisquis contra, vel simul arma tulit.*
> *Quis Thebas, septemque duces sine carmine nosset,*
> *Et quicquid post haec, quidquid et ante fuit?*
> *Dij quoque carminibus (si fas est dicere) fiunt,*
> *Tantaque magestas ore canentis eget.*
>
> *O'Sullivan Beare 1621: 2v*

> By verse virtue lives on and, avoiding the tomb, becomes known to late posterity. wasting time consumes both steel and stone; no thing has a strength greater than that of time. But writing endures the years. Through writing you know Agamemnon and everyone who bore arms with him or against him. Who would know of Thebes and the seven leaders, were it not for verse, or of all that went before and after? Even the gods, if 'tis right to say this, are created by verse; their mighty majesty needs the bard's voice.
>
> *trans. Wheeler 2015: 451–3*

Carroll has argued convincingly that O'Sullivan Beare, by quoting these lines of Ovid, recognizes the powerful role of writing in preserving the memory and creating history (2001: 122). Hence, he positions himself in the text as a recorder of memory which saves his devastated homeland from oblivion. As a framing paratextual device, moreover, the

quotation anticipates the narrative focus on warfare in Ireland and allusions to classical antiquity.

Tyrannical governments in John Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus*

John Lynch shared O'Sullivan Beare's views on English misgovernment of Ireland and on the abuse of its Catholic population. *Cambrensis Eversus* contains a list of grievances against English empire-building in Ireland, often made by analogy to classical precedents for tyrannical governments. Like O'Sullivan Beare, Lynch characterizes English rule as a foreign authority imposed on Ireland, and severely criticizes the disenfranchisement of the native Irish, such as their exclusion from holding seats in Parliament or civic offices (O'Sullivan Beare 1621: 63v–63r, Lynch 1848: 68–70). While discussing the 1661 Restoration Parliament, whose House of Commons had become exclusively Protestant (cf. Dennehy 2008: 55; McCormick 2018: 100–1), Lynch writes:

> Verres was accused by Cicero of a most grievous offence, for having, on the death of a Senator, substituted (for a bribe) a colonist for a native, contrary to a law, which enacted, that the number of natives should exceed by one that of colonists in the Senate of Agrigentum and Heraclea. Our Parliament has far surpassed the guilt of Verres, for it consists of colonists, to the utter exclusion of the natives, and almost of the denizens.
>
> *Lynch, trans. Kelly 1848: 27*

Lynch evokes Cicero's famous speech *Against Verres* (2.50), which accuses the former governor of Sicily, Gaius Verres (120–43 BCE), of violating the laws, as Lynch describes. Cicero distinguishes between the old citizens, the indigenous population of Agrigentum and Heraclea, and the new citizens, that is, the colonists. In the excerpt quoted above, Lynch characterizes the Gaels and the Old English (denizens) as the citizens who are eligible to take seats in the Irish Parliament, on the basis of their birth in Ireland and the length of residence there. He contrasts these two groups to Protestant newcomers in Ireland who have a majority representation in the Parliament.

Lynch then compares the Cromwellian government's dispossession and forced displacement of Irish Catholics with the 'cruelty' of the thirty tyrants installed in Athens after its defeat by Sparta in 404 BCE, following the protracted Peloponnesian War:

> [I]n this way 'those men drove out the natives, whom fate had spared in war, from their homeland, they confiscated their property and divided it among themselves.' . . . The remnant of the Athenians who remained at home were disarmed and driven from the city to live among their ruined fortifications: my countrymen were disarmed and penned up in the narrow limits of Connaught.
>
> *Lynch, trans. Kelly 1848: 43, slightly modified*

Lynch alludes to the remote Greek past, referring to *The Book on the Great Generals of Foreign Nations* (VIII:5) written by the Roman biographer Cornelius Nepos (*c.* 110–*c.* 25 BCE),[3] to make more vivid and impactful the aggression of the Cromwellian administration in Ireland, which systematically confiscated the property of Catholics and transplanted them to the infertile areas of Connacht in the west of Ireland or expelled them from the country (Barnard 2000: 52–62; Gillespie 2006: 187–94). It is interesting to note that Lynch himself had supported the surrender of Galway during its siege by the Parliamentary army, as noted above, leading to his banishment, so it is possible that he even identified himself with the exiled Athenians mentioned above, who were lucky to have escaped death in war.

Benevolent integration methods of Graeco-Roman empires

Alongside negative *exempla* of tyrannical governments from classical antiquity, Lynch simultaneously evoked, even more extensively, what he perceived to be the positive qualities of ancient imperial policies as a counterpoint to destructive English practices. In doing so, he entered into a direct polemic, as had O'Sullivan Beare, with Richard Stanihurst. Concerning the proper ways of consolidating conquest, Stanihurst had written:

> For where the countrey is subdued, there the inhabitants ought to be ruled by the same law that the conquerour is governed, to weare the same fashion of attyre, wherewith the victour is vested, & speake the same language, that the vanquisher parleth.
>
> *Holinshed 1807–8: 5*

Lynch conversely proposed that successful conquest entailed the preservation of native power structures, property, religious freedoms and the customs of the natives. He substantiated his argument by appeals to classical modes of benevolent integration of conquered peoples, providing a plethora of examples of conquerors from antiquity sparing the political institutions of the subjected territories. Some of the examples were borrowed from Hugo Grotius' *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* ('The Rights of War and Peace', 1625), which deeply influenced Lynch's oeuvre, in general (cf. Campbell 2008: 173–4, 177, 251–3). Grotius expounded his ideas about the means of governing the empires by referring to ancient imperial policies. Following Grotius (1631: 495 § VIII), Lynch mentions that Athenians and Spartans did not exercise *imperium* (sovereignty) over captured cities (1848: 196), meaning that they did not intervene in the self-government of the conquered nations. By evoking Athenian and Spartan policies, Lynch makes an implicit contrast with the extensive jurisdiction of the English Parliament in Ireland to which the indictments for treason and rebellion against Irish Catholics were referred (1848: 10). Since he also mentions cities here (*civitates*), Lynch may also have had in mind how the Cromwellian government revoked the charters of Irish towns and subjected them to military administration (Barnard 2000: 62–71).

For Lynch, the preservation of political autonomy in conquered nations primarily involved leaving native political classes intact. He singles out Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great as emperors who 'did not summon foreigners to Corinth, but the citizens of that State whose interests were concerned' (Lynch, trans. Kelly 1848: 11). Lynch thought that the Macedonian policy was preferable to the English strategy of appointing New English Protestants to the Irish Parliament. The exclusion of Irish Catholics from elections for the Restoration Parliament was, according to Lynch, an effective enslavement of the people (Lynch 1848: 28; cf. Dennehy 2008: 54–5). He thus echoed early modern political discourse, informed by the reception of classical philosophy, in which the inability to exercise one's political rights was regarded as being akin to slavery (Skinner 2004: 286–97). In Lynch's opinion, the Roman model of conquest was also to be distinguished from the English by its policy of allotting no more than two-thirds of the conquered territory to new settlers (1848: 46–8), in contrast to the excessive and wholesale land confiscations under Cromwell (Gillespie 2006: 186–94). To Lynch's disappointment, the Act of Settlement of 1662 confirmed Cromwellian land redistribution instead of restoring lands to dispossessed Catholics.

The Roman Empire also appears in Lynch as a model for religious toleration. Under the rule of the first Christian emperors, he suggests, Rome did not persecute pagans and allowed them to continue professing their faith publicly. Moreover, non-Christians were not excluded from high civic and military office; Lynch gives the examples of Symmachus (345–402 CE), a Roman statesman, and Gildo (d. 398 CE), a Roman general (1848: 72). Adducing such historical precedents added weight to Lynch's agitation for the rights of Irish Catholics, who hoped that Charles II would allow them liberty of conscience (Greaney 2022: 147–50). Appeals to the religious history of Rome were also part of Lynch's strategy for undermining the perception of Catholicism as an impediment to loyalty to a Protestant monarch. If the Christian emperors of the Roman Empire did not oppress pagans, surely it was possible to end the persecution of Irish Catholics (Lynch 1848: 72).

Looking back to Stanihurst's formulation, quoted above, Lynch further rejects the assimilation proposed by his opponent through recourse to the Roman imperial model. Romans did not compel conquered peoples to abandon their native dress for the Roman toga (Lynch 1848: 194–6), nor their native language for Latin (Lynch 1848: 178). The Trojan conquest of Italy is adduced, moreover, as an illustration of conquerors themselves becoming assimilated with those they have subdued, adopting their language and customs:

> [S]uccessful invaders have frequently adopted the language of the conquered people. The Trojans, it is said, conquered Italy; yet their language soon became obsolete, and the original language of the country was the only one spoken by the victors and the vanquished, a circumstance to which Virgil alludes in the favor granted to Juno by Jupiter, that 'Ausonia's sons preserved the speech and customs of their fatherland [*Sermonem Ausonii patriam moresque tenerent*].'
>
> *Lynch, trans. Kelly 1848: 177, slightly modified*

Although Lynch mentions no source for his quotation, the text is a near quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid* (12.834), where 'Ausonia' is the poetic name for Italy: *sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt* ('Ausonia's sons will keep the speech of and customs of their forefathers'). Whether the variant Lynch quotes appeared in a contemporary edition or is introduced by him is unclear, but it generates a slight shift in emphasis that is germane to Lynch's broader project. Where Lynch uses *patriam*, 'fatherland', rather than *patrium*, 'ancestors', this ties in with a broader thematic focus on territorial issues in *Cambrensis Eversus*, to which I return below. For now, we observe that the line is part of the dialogue between Jupiter and Juno about the future of the Trojan exiles and Latium. Juno requests that Jupiter allow the people of Latium (in central Italy) to retain their native language and attire so that Troy will remain fallen 'together with her name' (*occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia*, *Aeneid* 12.828). Jupiter reassures her that the people of Rome will preserve their language and customs and will become even greater after mixing with the Trojans.

By means of classical *exempla*, Lynch thus proposes that successful empires need not destroy the political institutions of their conquered peoples, nor compel their subjects to abandon their religion, language and customs. At the same time, Lynch, in fact, shared the conviction of his opponent Stanihurst, and of English authors, that conquerors might validly introduce elements from their own political systems and cultures to their subjects. Turning again to the Romans, Lynch posited that they had successfully consolidated their conquest by admitting their new subjects to Roman rights and institutions, particularly to Roman law. He quotes a quatrain from the Latin poem *De reditu suo* ('On one's return') by the fifth-century Roman poet Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, describing a voyage from Rome to Gaul (1.63-6), by way of illustration:

> *Fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam,*
> *Profuit invitis te dominante capi,*
> *Dumque offers victis proprii consortia juris*
> *Urbem fecisti, quod prius orbis erat.*
>
> *Lynch 1848: 218*

> For nations far apart thou hast made a single fatherland; under thy dominion captivity hath meant profit even for those who knew not justice: and by offering to the vanquished a share in thine own justice, thou hast made a city of what was erstwhile a world.
>
> *trans. Duff and Duff 2014: 769*

The poem itself is an itinerary which also contains a eulogy to Rome as a 'queen of the world' (*De reditu suo* 2.17). The quatrain quoted praises Roman expansion and the integrative power of its conquests, which bridge the gap between the vanquished and the victors. Lynch may have copied the stanza from John Davies' *A Discovery of the True Causes of Why Ireland Was Never Entirely Subdued* (1612); the sentences preceding the quotation in *Cambrensis Eversus* and in Davies' *Discovery* are almost identical (see Davies 1890: 272).[4] Davies attributes the failure of the English conquest of Ireland to the

extended exclusion of the Irish from the English legal system, contrasting the Roman strategy of strengthening their conquest by means of giving their law and protection to the conquered. Highlighting how a previously disparate and, by implication, expansive 'world' has been made a 'city', the poem underlines the transformative and binding power of enfranchising diverse subjects.

Cambrensis Eversus presents English policy in Ireland as increasingly discriminatory, perpetuating inequality between the colonizers and the colonized compared to the wise Roman model of political integration. The time lapse, identified by Davies, is significant also for Lynch. He portrays the Romans as granting rights of citizenship to their subjects immediately after their subjugation (Lynch 1848: 218), a practice which, Lynch suggests, brings peace and stability to the empire. Conversely, the disenfranchisement of the Irish has led to warfare and political instability over several centuries.

We must, of course, observe that Lynch's rhetorical strategy in creating a clear opposition, between a positive ancient Roman model of empire and a disastrous contemporary English one, occludes any sinister aspects of Roman imperial conquest. He was aware of, for instance, the excessive taxation imposed by the Romans on Gaul, which generated deep resentment among the native populations (Lynch 1851–2: 252), and of the persecution of Christians in the pagan Roman Empire (Lynch 1851–2: 136). In *Cambrensis Eversus*, however, Lynch skirts over these issues. His portrayal of ancient Rome as a model for benevolent and successful enfranchisement reflects contemporary discourse on governing multiple administrative and ethnically diverse territories (Elliott 1992: 52–5; Robertson 1995: 3–36). Lynch's own vision lay somewhere between early modern concepts of 'union by incorporation', which assumed subjection of the conquered territory to the government and laws of the conqueror, and of the *aeque principaliter* union of 'equally important' areas, which required parity of status and esteem of constituent parts and their treatment as distinct entities with their own institutions, laws and identities (Elliott 1992: 52–3). Lynch owed the concept of incorporation, which overcame the contradictions between two modes of union, to Grotius, who proposed that imperial conquest involved the communication of rights together with the maintenance of previous privileges (Grotius 1631: 186 § VIII–IX). From the representation of the Roman Empire in *Cambrensis Eversus*, Lynch ostensibly hoped that the constituent kingdoms of the Stuart monarchy, although obtained by conquest, might share equal rights and liberties, while simultaneously maintaining their own elites, political institutions and cultural identities.

Irish identity and citizenship

Deeply concerned with the rights of Catholics, as we have seen, Lynch belongs to a discursive tradition different from that of O'Sullivan Beare, in that he tended to minimize the distinctions between Irish Catholics of Gaelic and Old English heritage (Campbell 2013: 41–2). Being himself of Old English heritage, Lynch appealed to Roman concepts of citizenship to support the claims of the Old English to be considered Irish citizens. His

discussion of Irish identity and his defence of the Old English responded to authors who had criticized the perceived Gaelicization of Old English families. Richard Stanihurst, for example, identified interethnic marriages between the Old English and the Gaels, and the acquisition of the Irish language by the Old English, as symptoms of degeneration (Holinshed 1807–8: 3–4; Barry and Morgan 2013: 106–10). Edmund Spenser also warned about the dangers of kin relations between the Old English and the Gaels. By learning the Irish language, the colonists not only abandoned their cultural identity, but also adopted the manners of the conquered, including seditious behaviour, he argued. Turning to classical *exempla*, Spenser held up the marriage of Alexander the Great to the foreigner Roxana, and Julius Caesar's affair with Cleopatra, as interethnic models portending death for emperors, and predicted similar disasters for co-mingling in Ireland (Spenser 1890: 106–7).

As Campbell has discussed, Lynch was also responding to the leaked contents of a 1658 report on Irish affairs, submitted by his adversary Richard O'Ferrall to the Holy Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, which identified the native Gaelic population of Ireland as the only true Irishmen, dismissing Old English Catholics as unjust owners of ecclesiastical property and as traitors (Campbell 2008: 69–83; Tjoelker 2012: 173). Lynch defends the Irish identity of the Old English in Ireland through analogy with a multifaceted Roman concept of *patria*. First evoking *patria* as territory, he argues that by colonizing a new territory, settlers acquire a new fatherland which they begin to identify as entirely their own with the passage of time.

Lynch then proceeds to consider *patria* as a familial bond. Rejecting Stanihurst's position, Lynch underlines that Old English and Gaelic families are tightly related to one another (1851–2: 146, 150–60). He normalizes interethnic marriages between colonizers and colonized through historical examples. For instance, he recounts how the German tribe of the town of Ubia rejected the demands of the Tenterii, another Germanic tribe, to kill their Roman neighbours, who had recently established a colony there. They are attributed direct speech in which they protest: 'Established here long ago, they [the Romans] have allied with us by marriage. This is their native land [*patria*]. Nor can we think that you are so unjust as to ask us to massacre our parents, our brethren, and our children' (Lynch 1851–2: 160). Lynch then poses a rhetorical question: 'If thirty years sufficed to convert the Romans and the Ubians into one people, are not 500 years powerful enough to make one people of the English and the Irish' (Lynch, trans. Kelly 1851–2: 161).

Lynch's position is thus entirely opposed to that of Spenser (quoted above), and the issue of interethnic marriage as conducive to successful empire-building is one to which Lynch returns through another classical *exemplum* of the Sabine women. Glossing over the violence of rape and forced marriage in this episode, Lynch discusses how the Sabine women who were abducted by the Romans persuaded their new husbands and their fathers to end the war. For Lynch, these forced unions ultimately represented instruments of peace-building between communities (1851–2: 160). An original point of violence became essentially irrelevant if the victor retained control for an extended period of time, and remained unchallenged (Lynch 1851–2: 48–50). Campbell, indeed,

argues that Lynch was influenced by the doctrine of prescription derived from Roman law, according to which tacit consent to usurpation, along with the length of possession, made the usurper a rightful owner of an acquired thing (Campbell 2008: 170–1; on the theory of prescription cf. Greenberg 2006: 20). According to this logic, Old English families, whose ancestors colonized Ireland long ago, had absolutely valid claims to land and property in Ireland.

At the same time, however, Lynch also recognizes that the right of Old English families to call Ireland their ancestral land might be contested by some, on account of their descent from foreign twelfth-century conquerors (Cunningham 2000: 152). To counter such potential arguments, he asserts that a true *patria* is defined by the country of birth (*nativitas*), not the country of ancestral origins (*origo*), where one's precursors were born (Lynch 1851–2: 166). Drawing also on the concepts of *domicilium* (dwelling) and *incola* (inhabitant), derived from Roman law, and quoting the Roman jurist Ulpian (*Corpus Juris Civilis* 50.16.190; Lynch 1851–2: 166–8), Lynch combines ideas about permanent residence and multi-ethnic inhabitants with his claims that Ireland is the proper homeland of both Old English and Gaelic populations.

Lynch emphasizes the political and legal connotations of *patria*, closely aligned with citizenship (*civitas*) in the Roman tradition (Wirszubski 1950: 3–4; Mathisen 2012: 747–9). He quotes from Cicero, *On the Laws* 2.5, to support the idea of obtaining a fatherland by enfranchisement as well as by birth (Lynch 1851–2: 168). In that passage, Cicero observes two kinds of *patria* for citizens of municipal towns, one generated by birth and one by citizenship. So, for example, Cato was a Tusculan by birth but a Roman by citizenship. Extrapolating to the Irish case, Ireland becomes the proper homeland in both senses for the descendants of Anglo-Norman colonists (Lynch 1851–2: 168). Lynch later alludes to Cicero's proposition that 'dual citizens' should attach their greatest affections and loyalty to the *patria* adopted by citizenship, suggesting that the 'descendants of the old English settlers are therefore sons of Ireland, grandsons of England; in the former, as their country [*patriam*], they are bound to centre all their affections [*charitatibus*]; the latter, they must venerate and respect' (Lynch, trans. Kelly 1851–2: 175). For Lynch, we must remember, the concept of political *patria* is coterminous with the boundaries of the realm (cf: Wells 1995: 9–15; Post 2015: 445–50), which is why he refers to Ireland as the true fatherland of the Old English. By evoking the concept of *patria* by law, Lynch further foregrounds his theory for the Irish identity of the Old English. The enfranchisement in Ireland of medieval Anglo-Norman colonists encouraged them to favour their new fatherland, where they could perform civic duties and obtain legal rights.

Reworking a passage from Grotius (1631: 493 §III), moreover, which quotes Seneca (*On Anger* 2.34) and Tacitus (*Annals* 11.24) on the significance of conferring citizenship on the conquered, Lynch proposes that this strategy, alongside interethnic marriages, is the best way to cement a mutual alliance between victors and vanquished. Through these classical allusions, Lynch implies that common subjecthood creates political bonds between victors and vanquished through transformation – from members of the various distinct groups to participants in the common *patria* who give preference to a territorial

identity. Roman parallels bolster Lynch's vision of multi-ethnic Irish identity as a tool of empire-building. Where figures like Stanihurst and Spenser advocated cultural separation and ethnic demarcation based on descent, Lynch advocated shared *patria* and subjecthood as guarantees for peace. By taking advantage of the territorialized Roman concepts of *patria* and citizenship, which were detached from ethnicity, culture and language and were open to immigrants and foreigners (Atkins 2018: 65–73; Crawford 2012), Lynch proposed an integrated approach to 'nativeness', thus legitimizing the entitlement of the Old English to the same privileges and rights as the Gaelic Irish.

Ireland-as-Penelope

At the time of writing *Cambrensis Eversus*, the Irish Catholic gentry were begging for royal favour, hoping for the restitution of lands confiscated in the 1650s (Campbell 2008: 86). They faced an uphill struggle, however, as blame for the 1641 uprising had been placed squarely on an alleged Catholic conspiracy and enshrined in the rhetoric of the 1662 Act of Settlement (Greaney 2022: 52–3). Lynch was keen to distance Irish Catholics from an association with natural rebelliousness to which they were often subjected (on which, see, e.g., Leerssen 1986: 46–9; Carroll 2001: 16–18). As Greeney (2002: 43–6) discusses, Lynch proposes that neither Catholicism nor ethnic background is an obstacle to Irish loyalty to the Stuart king in secular matters. Lynch combines criticism of English empire-building in Ireland with deferential treatment of the Stuart kings, evoking Ireland as a metaphorical Penelope in order to highlight her devotion to the ruler:

> For while your other kingdoms are delirious with joy, Ireland alone grieves and mourns … while others enjoy security, I am still oppressed with a load of calamities, brought on by that peace. In this way Penelope seeing that the Greek leaders were safe after the destruction of Troy, longing only for her husband, Ulysses, poured forth her grief and cried: 'For others Pergamum has been overthrown; for me alone it still stands.' [*Diruta sunt aliis, uni mihi Pergama restant.*] In the same way she [Ireland], weeping about the similar calamity she had suffered, spoke: 'Cromwell is dead for others but for me he lives'.
>
> *Lynch 1848: 6; trans. adapted from Kelly 1848: 7*

The quotation referencing Pergamum, that is, Troy, is extracted from Ovid's *Heroides* (1.51), although Lynch does not cite the source. It belongs to the letter Penelope writes to her husband, Ulysses, who, unlike the other Greek warriors, has still not returned after the fall of Troy. Penelope contrasts her own unfortunate position with the happiness of other wives, who have already been reunited with their husbands. She comments several times that, for her, the Greek victory at Troy is not worth the price she paid for it, namely the absence of her husband (*Heroides* 1.47-50). In Lynch, casting Charles II as the wandering Ulysses may have evoked his flight to France in 1651, after the final defeat of the Royalist army before he ascended to the throne. Perhaps more importantly,

however, it symbolizes the physical and metaphorical absence of Charles II from Ireland since the fall of Cromwellian regime.[5] The phrase 'while others enjoy security' implies a stark contrast between Ireland 'oppressed', like Penelope, while the kingdoms of England and Scotland celebrate the triumph of the Restoration. With the emphasis on 'oppression', Lynch also underlines the continuous discrimination against Irish Catholics.

The Ireland-as-Penelope metaphor functions in *Cambrensis Eversus* not only as a lament on the miserable state of the kingdom of Ireland but also as an optimistic political prophecy. The simile expectantly anticipates a future reunion, as readers know that Ulysses and Penelope are eventually reunited. For Lynch, that reunion entails resolving the grievances of Irish Catholic subjects, a hope he expresses at the end of the dedicatory part of *Cambrensis Eversus* (1848: 76–8). By analogy with the famous Penelope, Ireland is shown to be neglected but also loyal and morally beyond reproach. Lynch thus applied a classical *exemplum* to the widespread metaphor of king as spouse to the realm, his wife, an image common in descriptions of the Stuart monarchy (Enright 1976) and of kingship in Irish bardic poetry (Ó Buachalla 1983: 86; Eichhorn-Mulligan 2006; O Riordan 2021: 215–20, 503–4, 569–70).

Lynch's self-representation: the author as Cicero

As with O'Sullivan Beare, discussed above, Lynch's experience of exile was integral to his identity. In *Cambrensis Eversus*, which Lynch originally published under the pseudonym Gratianus Lucius, he openly identifies with exiled Roman figures, most notably Cicero. The pseudonym, however, suggests the emperor Gratian (367–83 CE), who was forced to flee to Lyon from Paris after failing to crush a revolt and invasion by Magnus Maximus, Roman general in Britain, and was subsequently killed. Maximus was proclaimed emperor but his victory was short-lived. In 388, Theodosius I defeated Maximus and restored Valentinian II to the imperial throne. The pseudonym may also have reminded readers of the recent history of the Stuarts: Gratian in the role of Charles I, Magnus Maximus as an analogy for Oliver Cromwell, and Valentinian II evoking Charles II (see D'Ambrières and Ó Ciosáin 2003: 54). At the same time, Lynch's pseudonym may have highlighted some aspects of his own biography as an expatriate who had to flee to France because of the defeat of the Irish Confederates. Lynch mentions Gratian approvingly as an emperor who issued a law on universal toleration (1848: 72), referring to the edict released in the aftermath of the Battle of Adrianople (378 CE), which allowed freedom of worship to all religious groups except for those already outlawed (cf. McEvoy 2013: 118–19).

On the other hand, Lynch fashions his literary persona in *Cambrensis Eversus* in imitation of Cicero. He cites Cicero extensively and adopts a Ciceronian strategy of refutation in consistently dismissing Gerald of Wales' arguments, chapter by chapter. In the dedication, Lynch mentions Cicero's recall to Rome after expulsion and exile, expressing similar hopes for Irish Catholic exiles (1848: 42). Here Lynch refers to the

version of events presented by the Roman historian Velleius Paterculus (19 BCE–31 CE), according to whom Cicero was forced to go into exile after suppressing the Catilinarian conspiracy because his adversary, Publius Clodius, proposed a law expelling those who executed a Roman citizen without trial (*Roman History* 2.29). In the epilogue, Lynch extracts a *sententia* from Cicero's speech in defence of Marcus Caelius (*Pro Caelio* 63), which praises the power of truth to defend itself against all the ingenuity and power of men, and against treachery (Lynch 1851–2: 498). These two allusions to Cicero, which frame Lynch's narrative, suggest a correlation between Lynch's projected authorial persona and a Ciceronian model.

Velleius Paterculus represents Cicero as a virtuous statesman, who earned exile as a form of 'reward' for saving the republic (*Roman History* 2.29). During the Renaissance, moreover, Cicero was perceived as an exemplary patriot committed to serving his *patria* (Baron 1938: 85–97; Hirschi 2012: 53–60). Likewise, Lynch presented himself as an ardent lover of his country (1848: 1), forced to emigrate by enemies who were vexed by his patriotic service. Modelling himself further on Cicero, Lynch exploited a Ciceronian style of forensic rhetoric to denounce the foes of his *patria* and defend fellow-citizens.

As a patriotic citizen, Lynch attacked the malevolent strategies of his enemies who provoked him to act in self-defence (on Cicero's persona as an attacker, see Kenty 2020: 26–52). Lynch quotes Cicero (*On Duties* 1.57) in describing his motivation for writing *Cambrensis Eversus*:

> [W]hen I saw all this, inspired with a most ardent love of my country, I vowed to devote, in the composition of this little work, all the energies of my soul to her defence, to vindicate her, to the best of my abilities, against the contumelies of interested slanderers . . .
>
> 'Parents are dear,' says Cicero, 'dear are children, relatives, and friends; but one's native land (*patria*), embraces all our loves.' . . . he who, when his country is in danger, does not strive with all his might to save her from impending danger, dishonours his parents, betrays his brethren, and must plead guilty to the ruin of all his connexions.
>
> *Lynch, trans. Kelly 1848: 107, 109*

Chief among the 'slanderers' is, of course, Giraldus Cambrensis, to whom Lynch's title refers.

It may be inferred that Lynch, proposing malicious intent behind Gerald's negative representation of the Irish (1851–2: 498–516), followed the Ciceronian strategy of argumentation in *Pro Caelio*, in which the Roman orator revealed the vested interests of the accusers behind charges of political violence against Marcus Caelius (cf. 20-1, 30-5, 49-50, 55, 60, 64-5). Utilizing Ciceronian techniques of defence, Lynch classifies charges against the Irish as '*maledictio*', 'abuse', unsupported by evidence, and shifts the blame from the accused to the accuser.

Lynch casts himself as a political martyr who is ready to expose possible dangers to the commonwealth, even if it threatens his status and security: 'I, however, being far from my native land [*patriam*], and out of the power of her governors, prefer the danger of public remonstrance to criminal silence' (Lynch 1848: 67). This strategy of self-fashioning may mirror Cicero's way of self-representation in the Catilinarian orations (*Against Catiline* 2.3, 15; 3.27-9; 4.1-2), in which he demonstrates eagerness to suffer for the sake of preserving the republic (on Cicero's persona as a political martyr, cf. Kenty 2020: 82–102). The implicit comparison to Cicero also emphasizes the heroic solitude of Lynch, who admits that he is alone in speaking the truth about Ireland, while his compatriots at home must keep silent for fear of persecution (1848: 66; on Cicero's solitude, cf. Steel 2005: 49–63). Thus, by establishing parallels between his persona and Cicero's, Lynch suggests his own political martyrdom and exile, and his total commitment to the king and *patria*, stressing his moral irreproachability and superiority over his enemies. Cicero's dual identity may further have appealed to Lynch: Cicero did not conceal his attachment to two *patriae*: one of origin, Arpinum, and one of citizenship, Rome, but prioritized commitments to his political fatherland, as discussed above. Likewise, Lynch gave precedence in his allegiance to the country of citizenship, Ireland, over the country of his remote ancestors, England.

Moreover, Cicero's strategy for the defence of the municipal men whose acquisition of Roman citizenship was questioned may also have been a useful model for Lynch. In these speeches, Cicero asserted that the foreignness of his defendants was not an obstacle to their Roman citizenship (cf. *Pro Archia Poeta* 5-6, 18-19; *Pro Balbo* 5-10, 18-19). He justified their right to be considered Romans on the basis of their service to the state (cf. *Pro Archia Poeta* 23; *Pro Balbo* 5-6, 63), referring to analogous precedents by which aliens were granted access to Roman liberties (cf. *Pro Balbo* 23-4, 31-2, 35, 46, 50-6). Similarly, Lynch described the sufferings of the Irish (1848: 50–2, 56; 1851–2: 90–112, 180–200), their inherent loyalty to the ruler and their service to the *patria* (1848: 32, 38, 44, 74; 1851–2: 78–80), along with precedents for foreigners being granted citizenship, to persuade his audience that the Old English population of Ireland, contrary to the allegations of English and Gaelic Irish opponents, were justly entitled to citizenship rights.

Migration, identity and Graeco-Roman antiquity: conclusions

In modelling themselves on two very different Roman exiled writers, O'Sullivan Beare on Ovid and Lynch on Cicero, the two main authors discussed in this chapter stressed different aspects of their projected patriotism. O'Sullivan Beare sought to immortalize Ireland by praising its achievements from a position of long-standing exile. Lynch represented himself as a virtuous citizen, a vociferous assailant of liars and enemies of the commonwealth, and a passionate defender of the truth. More generally, however, O'Sullivan Beare's and Lynch's engagement with Graeco-Roman antiquity supplied them

with important frameworks for reflecting on imperial power and Irish identity. Classical allusions in their works highlight their education (cf. Tjoelker 2012: 1126), but also the significance of classically-trained European audiences for their arguments. Both authors mine classical material to de-barbarize Irish history by contextualizing it within the Graeco-Roman past. Selective quotations from Roman literature, and references to Greek and Roman history, are used to bolster critiques of English conquest and assert various forms of Irish identity.

Although both authors criticized the English conquest of Ireland, they viewed its imperial destiny differently. Trojan motifs in O'Sullivan Beare's *Compendium* generated a vision for the future incorporation of Ireland into the Spanish Empire, whereas the Ireland-as-Penelope metaphor in Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus* optimistically envisaged a prospective reunion of the neglected kingdom of Ireland with its absent Stuart monarch. Lynch constructed a selectively whitewashed image of a universally benevolent Roman Empire in *Cambrensis Eversus*, suggesting an ideal model for the British monarchy to emulate, where constituent parts would share allegiance and liberties while preserving native political elites, institutions and cultural identities.

O'Sullivan Beare's and Lynch's divergent views on the issue of inclusive Irish identity, and on questions of Old English and Gaelic heritage, impacted their usage of classical allusions. For O'Sullivan Beare, a member of the Gaelic nobility, who supported segregated Irish identities, the metaphor of Circe's cup, which he reversed in *Zoilomastix* to suggest that the English had debased Irish culture, justified a separatist policy. Lynch, in contrast, who was himself of Old English descent, argued that Old English families should be considered indigenous to Ireland, in part by evoking Roman precedents and territorialized concepts of *patria* and citizenship which prioritized residence, birthplace and enfranchisement over ethnic descent. Imagining Irish history within a larger European framework, O'Sullivan Beare and Lynch, on the one hand, followed in the footsteps of their medieval Irish predecessors, who inserted the Gaels into the universal migration narrative (see Blanco Ríos and Fomin, Chapters 3 and 4 in this volume). At the same time, their own physical presence on the European Continent places Irish concerns of migration and exile in the heart of Europe, rather than at a distance on the island of Ireland as in medieval origin narratives (Brady 2022: 84).

Notes

1. This research has been supported by a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship (PF) under contract number 101105224. I would like to express my gratitude to Isabelle Torrance for her invaluable assistance throughout the preparation of the chapter and to Jonathan Barnes for the help with Latin translations.

2. It is unclear which edition of Virgil's *Aeneid* O'Sullivan Beare consulted. The 1582 edition, printed in Antwerp by Pierre Bellère, which would have been available to him, contains '*labores*' rather than '*dolorem*' (Virgil 1582: 142).

3. Lynch attributes the authorship of this work to the fourth-century grammarian Aemilius Probus.
4. It is unclear whether Lynch is aware of the source for this quatrain, or whether he merely cites it from Davies (who does not mention the author).
5. In the early modern period, a king who failed to respond to the demands of subjects in a subordinate kingdom, where he did not officially reside, was understood as an absence (Elliott 1955: 253–65).

CHAPTER 7
THE *IUS COMMUNICANDI* (RIGHT TO TRAVEL) AND THE IRISH FRANCISCANS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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The most complex and ambitious theories of human society authored by any Irish person in the seventeenth century were those composed and published in Latin by Irish Franciscan friars living in Rome and Paris. These friars, living outside Ireland, were interacting with and making use of an intellectual tradition which was an extension of that of Latin antiquity, and, in their firm support for the Spanish Empire, they articulated and lived a variety of Irish imperial identity. The research presented here is a small part of a wider study of Franciscan intellectual life in seventeenth-century Rome that is concerned, in particular, with the Franciscan theology derived from the work of the fourteenth-century theologian John Duns Scotus and called Scotism. St Isidore's College, Rome, was founded for a community of Irish Observant Franciscans in 1625 and it was a major centre of study for Scotist theology. In 1633 the leading Irish friar, Luke Wadding, was commanded by the minister general of the Observants to publish the first full edition of the works of Scotus, and Wadding and his team of Irish friars saw this project through to publication in 1639. Wadding's edition presented his readers with a useable and readable Scotus, and the extensive commentaries that accompanied the text defended Scotus against a range of critics outside the Franciscan order. The edition was thus intended to defend the theological credibility of Scotus and provide a resource from which textbooks and lectures might be written, so that this theology could be taught to young friars throughout the Catholic world. Wadding himself composed a massive history of the Franciscan order, as well as a useful guide to Franciscan authors. And within Rome, Wadding and others battled to defend the Franciscan way of being religious inside vital Roman institutions like the Roman Inquisition and the Index of Forbidden Books (Balić 1957; Broggio 2010; Millet 2009–18).

There are different reasons why one might try to write the history of Irish people like Wadding and Punch, who made accomplished careers outside of Ireland. For most of the twentieth century, historians with permanent positions at the more prominent Irish universities were generally concerned with writing the history of the Irish state from its colonial origins to independence. This tended to mean concentrating on State Paper sources in English and neglecting those sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Catholic exiles who made careers for themselves on the Continent (Brady 1994). The history of those Catholic exiles was very often written by extremely learned and skilled Irish Catholic clergy. These clergymen were less concerned with the history of the Irish state than with the histories of the Irish Church and the Irish nation: reasonably enough, they

saw these histories as intertwined. Both writing about states and writing about nations involves metaphysics. In the former case, this is because a state is an intangible artificial person, separate from governed and governor, and living beyond the life of any individual. In the latter case, it is because writing about nations generally involves describing a national spirit from which it is composed, and by which it is shaped over time. In this way, the Catholic priest and accomplished historian Patrick Corish, when speaking about Luke Wadding on Radio Éireann in 1957, could regard the modern Irish national spirit as having been shaped especially by medieval English-Ireland, Gaelic Ireland and Counter-Reformation Catholicism (Corish 1957; Maume 2009–18). The study of Counter-Reformation Catholicism thus provided important information about the Irish national spirit.

The work of scholars of the early modern Irish diaspora who were also clergymen, like Patrick Corish, Canice Mooney and Benignus Millet, will always remain indispensable to students of Irish history. But those Irish Franciscans who were at work in seventeenth-century Rome might also be significant to those who are not directly interested in the history of the Irish state, the Irish Church or the Irish nation. These seventeenth-century Franciscans can tell us useful things about the choices facing Europeans, in general, as the Continent underwent its experience of early modernity. The Irish friars, alongside their Italian colleagues, contributed to an intense flare of Franciscan theology in seventeenth-century Rome. And the fact that this Franciscan moment in Rome was defeated, or out-competed, by the end of the seventeenth century is also significant.

What does this have to do with the classical world and Greek and Latin literature? Wadding's Roman associates included the famous poet Bonaventure Baron (Millet 1950; Clavin 2009–18), whose works in Latin are infused with classical style.[1] But in addition to this, all of these early modern Franciscans operated in the world of early modern university learning, known to historians as scholasticism, and the language in which scholasticism was carried out (in lectures, public disputations, examinations and textbooks) was Latin (Forlivesi 2013). In the past, scholars of Neo-Latin were often disdainful of the rather ugly, professional Latin of the medieval and early modern universities, and tended to look to the Latin literature of fifteenth-century Italian humanism as the origin point of the Latin literature that interested them (Ijsewijn 1977). But this is changing, not least because the attitudes of historians to the early modern European universities have altered substantially over the last fifty years. Whereas Europe's universities were once dismissed as obscurantist obstacles to modernity, the New History of Universities now argues that these institutions were vital centres of cultural transmission (Knight 2015; Brockliss 1996). Crucially, the institutional nature of the early modern universities and colleges – their bureaucracy – allows us to track the development of new ideas in detail, and their transmission to the thousands of young men who trooped in and out of these institutions, year in, year out, over the centuries. This chapter will demonstrate that certain classical ideas, especially classical ideas about travel, were built-in to the scholastic curriculum.

While the aforementioned developments in the history of universities are relatively recent, historians of liberalism across Europe have long been interested in some Catholic

scholastics, in particular those sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dominican and Jesuit theologians who revived the theology of their thirteenth-century predecessor Thomas Aquinas. For English-speaking scholars, these Thomist theologians with their strong doctrines of natural law were important to the development of the English proto-liberal theorists Thomas Hobbes and John Locke (Dauber 2020). For German-speakers, the same Thomist theologians were an important resource for the early seventeenth-century Dutchman Hugo Grotius, generally regarded as the founder of the discipline of *Völkerrecht* or international law (Scattola 1999). This is the context for much learned writing about the Catholic Thomist tradition by scholars like Quentin Skinner and Annabel Brett (Skinner 1978; Brett 1997). But Franciscan scholasticism has generally been omitted from these accounts, and this Franciscan scholasticism offers rather a different perspective on the development of the early modern European state.

One of the areas in which Franciscan scholasticism varied strongly from Thomist scholasticism was with regard to the *ius communicandi*, or right to travel, a doctrine with strong classical origins in Roman law. This chapter will explain the position of the Franciscans, including important Irish Franciscans, in three steps. First, it will describe the significance of the *ius communicandi* to the early modern Thomist theological tradition that was maintained by the Dominicans, and to a more limited extent by the Jesuits. That such a natural right to travel existed was part of a Thomist tendency always to limit, or otherwise direct, the powers of states and princes by means of natural law. Second, this chapter will sketch the rather different Franciscan and Scotist way of thinking about laws and states, in which natural law was much less important. Ironically, this made the Scotist state a rather a harder, less porous and more modern entity then the state of the Thomists. For the Scotists, the right that allows one to pass over state boundaries is not the right to travel, but the right to preach, the *ius praedicandi*. For these Franciscans, only sacred power transcended borders. The third part of this chapter will review the position on the *ius praedicandi* of an Irish Scotist named Raymond Caron, and the opposition that his views met with in Rome in the 1660s. A natural right to travel was not of very much interest to these Irish Franciscans. Instead, they were preoccupied by the right to preach that had been established by divine command.

The 'right to travel' (*ius communicandi*) in European universities

The *ius communicandi* or 'right to travel' holds an important place in the history of European liberalism and European empire. In January 1539, the Dominican friar Francisco de Vitoria, who held a chair in theology at the University of Salamanca, delivered a long lecture on the Spanish monarchy's title to central and south America (Vitoria 1991: 231–92). Vitoria insisted that infidels really owned their property, and that infidel laws and states were real laws and states that Christians were obliged to obey (Vitoria 1991: 239–52). He also rejected any title that rested on the ownership of the whole world by either the pope or the emperor (Vitoria 1991: 252–64). But the *ius*

praedicandi, or right of preaching the Gospel, provided a possible justification for Spanish empire. Christ said in Mark 16:15, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' This constituted a divine command that Christians were obliged to obey. The obstruction of this *ius praedicandi* provided, Vitoria believed, a just cause for war (Vitoria 1991: 284–6).

Vitoria's explanation of the *ius communicandi* or 'right to travel' was more complex, because it involved the collision of two rather different traditions: Roman law and scholasticism. The first chapters of the second book of Justinian's sixth-century codification of Roman law, *The Institutes*, insisted that the sea, the seashore, harbours and rivers were common to all humans. The law is worth quoting, because, despite its concern with the lives of humble fishermen, it later became important in arguments in favour of European imperialism:

> *Et quidem naturali iure communia sunt omnium haec: aër, aqua profluens, et mare, et per hoc litora maris. Nemo igitur ad litius maris accedere prohibetur, dum tamen villis, et monumentis, et aedificiis abstineat, quia non sunt iuris gentium, sicut est mare. Flumina autem omnia et portus publica sunt, ideoque ius piscandi omnibus commune est in portu fluminibusque . . . Riparum quoque usus publicus est iuris gentium, sicut ipsius fluminis . . . Litorum quoque usus publicus iuris gentium est, sicut ipsius maris, et ob id quibuslibet liberum est casam ibi ponere, in quam se recipiant, sicut retia sicare et ex mari reducere. Proprietas autem eorum potest intellegi nullius esse, sed eiusdem iuris esse, cuius et mare, et quae subiacent mari terra vel arena.*
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> *Beck, 1829,* Institutionum*, 2.1.1-5*

> And so all of the following things are common to all by the law of nature: the air, running water, the sea, and consequently the seashore. No one therefore is forbidden access to the seashore, provided that he or she abstains from injury to houses, monuments, and buildings, because these are not of the law of peoples as is the sea. However, all rivers and habours are public, therefore there is a right common to all of fishing in habours and rivers . . . The public use of the banks of the river, as of the river itself, is also part of the law of peoples . . . The public use of the seashore is also of the law of nations, just as of the sea, and for that reason everyone is free to build a shelter there to recover, as well as to take nets from the sea and dry them. The ownership of the seashore cannot be said to belong to anyone, but is subject to the same law as the sea, as does the soil or sand that lies beneath the sea.[2]

Vitoria also referenced Virgil's *Aeneid* for evidence of a general custom of hospitality, citing the speech of Aeneas' companion Ilioneus to Queen Dido of Carthage, in which he suggested that only a barbarous land would deny travellers temporary shelter (Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.539-40; Vitoria 1557: 354). But Vitoria was determined to integrate that Roman material with the natural law that he found in his master, Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas had

argued that the purposes for which God built humans informed humanity about the natural lawfulness or unlawfulness of their actions. Among other things, God had built humans to be social and political (Kossel 2002). Vitoria fused this idea of the natural lawfulness of human sociability with the ideas of common ownership of seas and rivers found in Roman law. He insisted that there had been a right to travel before the fall of humanity when all things were held in common and that this right had never been revoked by the subsequent introduction of private property. This meant that the Spanish had the right to travel in the Americas and could not be prevented from doing so by human positive laws (Vitoria 1991: 278–9). In addition, the Spanish could lawfully trade among those infidels, so long as they did no harm by doing so, and might also possibly be permitted to dig for gold on common land (Vitoria 1991: 279–81).

Elements of this position were taken up by the Jesuit scholastic, Francisco Suárez. The *ius gentium* or 'law of peoples', mentioned in the extract from Justinian's *Institutes* above, was understood by scholastics to mean the range of just practices common among nations, and they often found it hard to distinguish them from natural law. But for Suárez, it meant that just as God had built certain purposes into individual humans, so God had also built purposes into states, so that by thinking about the purposes of states, one could understand what it was lawful and unlawful for them to do. This meant, Suárez wrote in his *De Legibus* ('On the Laws'), that states were members of a universal society and the *ius gentium* is the law that arises if one thinks about the purposes of those states in international society. In this way, the law of war, grounded in the right of a state to defend itself, was part of the *ius gentium*. So too were the conventions concerning ambassadors and travel for commerce (Suárez, 1613: 2.19).

Elements of this Thomist tradition for thinking about states and the right to travel were taken up by the Dutch legist Hugo Grotius and thence related to the Dutch insistence on their right to go where they wanted and take what they wanted (Mortimer 2021: 251–4). Grotius is taken by German scholars of *Völkerrecht* or international law to be the founder of their discipline (Becker 2017: 1–13). This tradition has thus been criticized, quite rationally, as being tainted with imperialism. Antony Anghie has argued that Vitoria's *ius communicandi* was a thoroughly imperial theory, taken up by Grotius, and leaving traces in the oppressive characteristics of international law to this day (Anghie 2005: 13–31; Allemann 2019).

The Franciscans and the 'right to travel'

Franciscan friars who followed John Duns Scotus in theology had their own doctrines about laws, states and travel that were distinct from those of the Dominicans and Jesuits. Paolo Broggio has described Rome's transformation, during the course of the sixteenth century, into the place that decided orthodoxy in Catholicism, finally eclipsing the University of Paris. This sharpened the need for important teaching institutions, including mendicant orders, to have an unimpeachably orthodox master to follow in theology (Broggio 2009). For the Dominicans, and in some respects the Jesuits, this master was

Aquinas. For both the Observant and Conventual Franciscans this was the fourteenth-century theologian John Duns Scotus (Balić 1957; Forlivesi 2002). Irish Franciscans had an additional patriotic reason to defend Scotus' theology, because they believed that Scotus himself had been Irish (Scotus 1620, *Vita Scoti*; Scotus 1639, vol. 1, *Vita Scoti*).

Scotus had strongly disliked any talk of divinely implanted human purposes in ethics, politics and natural law theory, because he believed this suggested that humans were driven by those purposes rather than by free choices (Kent 2003). For Scotus, natural law was a relatively weak phenomenon. It was a kind of divine command that had a certain compatibility with human reason, like the second table of the Ten Commandments (Möhle 2003). In fact, for Scotus and those who followed him, natural law was very often less important than either divine command or the positive law of human governments. For example, Scotus and all the Scotists argued that Jewish infants should be baptized by the secular prince over the objections of their parents, because the prince was obliged to weigh the right of the parents against the right of God, and God's right was more important (Marmursztejn and Piron 2004). The Italian Scotist Filippo Fabri lectured in theology at Padua and had his massive *Disputationes Theologicae* printed at Venice in 1613 (Forlivesi 2002: 101, 118). Fabri thought that a simple divine command was at stake. Christ had issued the positive law of baptism, commanding in Matthew 28:19, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Because natural law was grounded in divine command, according to Fabri, no natural right could exist that was contrary to divine command (Fabri 1613–14, *In Quartum Sententiarum*, 85-9).

That Scotus' attitude to law was more voluntarist, more concerned with the will of the law-maker than that of the Thomists, is perhaps not surprising. What is arguably curious is that the Scotists thought that the laws of princes and human governments were often more powerful than natural law. For example, the Scotists did not believe that human states and governments were founded by natural law. Scotus argued that before the fall of humanity, there was a natural law that all things should be held in common. Among wicked humans after the fall, however, this precept of commonality would have provided insufficient protection for the weak, who would have been at the mercy of the strong. So, this natural law of common ownership was revoked. This meant that humans might own things in common, if they wanted to, or might choose that property should be owned by individuals. Natural law was silent on all this (Scotus 1639, 9: 156; Scotus 2001: 29–35). Property ownership and political power were thus not inevitable parts of human life but were fundamentally voluntary. This emphasis on the voluntary nature of property ownership and political power was clearly designed to defend the old Franciscan idea that one could be human and yet not own property. But this meant that the fundamental justification for the state was also voluntary. Just political power was based on common consent and election by the community:

> *Auctoritas vero politica, quae est supra extraneos, sive in una person resideat sive in communitate, potest esse iusta ex communi consensu et electione ipsius communitatis . . . utpote si ad civitatem aliquam aedificandum vel inhabitandum concurrerunt*

extranei aliqui, videntes se non posse bene regi sine aliqua auctoritate, poterant concorditer consentire, ut vel uni persona vel communitati committerent illam communitatem . . . Et ista auctoritas politica utraque iusta est, quia iuste potest quis se submittere uni personae vel communitati in his quae non sunt contra legem Dei, in quibus melius potest dirigi per illum cui se subicit vel submittit quam per seipsum. Ergo habemus complete quomodo poterat condi lex positiva iusta, quia ab habente prudentiam in se vel in consiliariis suis, et cum hoc habente auctoritatem iustam aliquo modo dictorum modorum in ista conclusion.

Scotus 2001: 32–5; Scotus 1639, 9: 156

Political authority, however, which is exercised over those outside [the family], whether it resides in one person or in a community, can be just by common consent and election on the part of the community . . . If some outsiders banded together to build a city or live in one, seeing that they could not be well governed without some form of authority, they could have amicably agreed to commit their community to one person or to a group . . . And both of these forms of political authority are just, because one person can justly submit himself to another or to a community in those things which are not against the law of God, and as regards which he can be guided better by the person or persons to whom he has submitted or subjected himself than he could by himself. Hence, we have here all that is required to pass a just law, because it would be promulgated by one who possesses prudence either in himself or in his counsellors and enjoys authority in one of the several ways mentioned in this conclusion.

Scotus 2001, ed. Wolter: 32–5

Scotus thus emphasized that just laws in this community were based on prudence and valid authority – not on natural law. In his commentary on this argument of Scotus, the Irish Franciscan Anthony Hickey was careful to point out that this was a different way of thinking about the origins of human society to that of Dominicans like Domingo de Soto or Jesuits like Luis de Molina, both of whom grounded *potestas civilis* (civil power) in natural law (Scotus 1639, 9: 156).

That the Scotists thought the laws of princes and human governments were often more powerful than natural law is clear from their writings on slavery. One clarification made by Hickey in his commentary on Scotus was the fact that Scotus clearly disliked slavery yet also believed that positive laws about slaves had to be obeyed. So, for instance, although Scotus disapproved of slavery, he could still maintain that a master had the positive law right to break up slave marriages and sell the husband to Africa and the wife to France (Scotus 1639, 9: 755–60). Hickey explained that a positive law could impede anything permitted, but not commanded, by the natural law. Natural law permitted marriage, according to Hickey, but did not command it. Therefore, a positive law of slavery could be established by the prince which impeded that marriage permitted by natural law (Scotus, 1639, 9: 757).

So, with regard to the *ius communicandi* employed by the Dominicans and Jesuits, there was no reason for the Scotists to be interested or impressed. The Roman Scotists, whether Irish or Italian, almost never mention it. One exception can be found in the massive set of Scotist commentaries that John Punch had printed in Paris in 1661. Reviewing possible just causes for war, Punch eventually came to the question of *commercium* or traffic:

> *Dico septimo: non licet inferre bellum ob denegatum commercium non valde necessarium, quod posset sine damno denegantium concedi, et esset vtile iis quibus denegaretur; licet tamen bello procurare ipsum quando est valde necessarium, et non cedit in detrimentum denegantis. Probatur prima pars, quia nulla lege iustitiae tenetur Rex, aut respublica vlla concurrere ad bonum alterius non necessarium. Ergo non potest cogi ad sic concurrendum. Probatur secunda pars quia iam iure gentium constitutum est, vt commercium necessarium permittatur, quando potest absque magno damno permittentium. Ergo iniuste denegatur in tali casu, et consequenter potest bello procurari talis iniuriae remedium.*
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> *Punch 1661, 4, 326*

> Seventh, I assert that it is illicit to wage war on account of denial of traffic that is not extremely necessary. This is traffic that could be conceded without loss by the ones denying access, and traffic that would be useful to those for whom it is denied. Yet it would be licit to obtain passage by war when it is extremely necessary, and it does not result in loss to the person denying traffic. The first part is proved because the king or commonwealth is bound by no law of justice to agree to the non-necessary good of another. Therefore king or commonwealth cannot be forced to agree in this way. The second part is proved because it has been established by the law of peoples that necessary traffic is permitted, when it can be done without great loss to the one permitting it. Therefore in such a case it would be unjustly denied, and consequently remedy of such an injury can be procured by war.

Just after this, Punch made it clear that he was thinking of the passage of bodies of troops. If Spain wished to send troops through France to suppress the Dutch rebels in their unjust war against Spain, Punch wrote, despite the fact that France would incur no loss by permitting such passage, Spain would thus have a just cause of war against France (Punch 1661, 6: 326). The loyalty of the Wadding circle to Spain is also evident here, even in a book printed in Paris. Punch did refer to the *ius gentium* or 'law of peoples' that permitted necessary travel, but this is clearly a more limited and less powerful law than that identified by Vitoria and grounded in the law of nature.

Overall, the Scotist position on the right of travel was that originally there had been no distinction of *dominia* or lordships, so that one might go where one wanted and take what one wanted, because all was owned in common by natural law. But that natural law was revoked, and now human governments divided the world between them, just as Noah had divided the earth among his sons. And while natural law might have permitted

travel, a Scotist would probably argue that it did not command it, and so a local human government could easily forbid communication to foreigners. With regard to natural law and human migration, the Scotist state had a firmer border than the Thomist one.

Raymond Caron and the 'right to preach'

Another reason why the Scotists were uninterested in the *ius communicandi* lay in the fact that they took the right to preach so seriously. In this regard, the Irish Franciscan Raymond Caron's *Apostolatus Missionariorum Per Universum Mundum* ('The Apostolate of Missionaries Throughout the Whole World'), printed in Paris in 1660, rewards attention. An earlier, shorter version had been printed in Antwerp seven years before (Caron 1653). The 1660 *Apostolatus* was a 600-page treatise dealing with every aspect of missionary activity, both theoretical and practical. It took a high line with regard to the independent powers of any missionary and looked simultaneously at the problems of missionaries in the non-European world and at missionaries in Protestant-ruled Northern Europe. It certainly reflected Caron's experiences in Ireland in the late 1640s. Caron had been appointed Apostolic Visitor to the Irish Franciscan province in early 1649 by forces in the Church that favoured a royalist alliance against the Parliamentarians. Indeed, Caron was instructed by Irish royalists to discipline a number of Franciscans who opposed them, but the general feeling in the order was that his appointment and proceedings were unlawful, and his commission was revoked in January 1650. The *Apostolatus*' tendency to suggest that missionaries, and especially Franciscan missionaries, were somewhat independent of papal authorities such as the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith) should be read in this light. The appalling destruction subsequently inflicted on Ireland and especially on Irish Catholics by the Parliamentarians perhaps confirmed Caron in his opinion that strong monarchy was always best for the Church even if the only available monarch was Protestant. After 1660 his monarchism was accompanied by a strong anti-papalism that he had learned from the Gallicans who insisted on the French Church's independence from the papacy (Fennessy 2004; Clavin 2009). Caron's *Remonstrantia Hibernorum* ('Objections of the Irish') of 1665 argued that secular monarchs could never be deposed by the papacy under any circumstances. With this, Caron stepped beyond Catholic orthodoxy as it was understood in Rome. Nevertheless, in his 1660 *Apostolatus*, he had clearly hoped to remain within the fold. The Franciscan friars of the Grand Couvent des Cordeliers, who indicated their approval of Caron's *Apostolatus*, included John Punch, someone who had been in the faction opposing Caron in the 1640s and early 1650s (Caron 1660: sig. e4r). Inflected by political experience, but fundamentally participating in the Scotist theological tradition, the *Apostolatus* was thus more profound than an ephemeral tract, as the Roman censors confirmed when they placed it on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1661 (Alexander VII 1667: 8).

In his *Apostolatus*, Caron insisted that the Franciscans from their first institution had been commanded to engage in mission by God, a divine command confirmed by

numerous papal bulls (Caron 1660: 15). Caron identified the kind of force that might be used in evangelization quite precisely:

> *Licet infideles et haeretici non possent absolute, directe, ac vi ad fidem cogi vel baptismum; princeps tamen Catholicus potest licite in suo regno (imo et tenetur si commode posset) omnes suos subditos infideles indirecte et disiunctiue cogere, idest, vt vel conuertantur, vel mulctis aut exilio plectantur.*
>
> *Caron 1660: 40*

> Although unbelievers and heretics cannot be absolutely, directly, and by force driven to the faith or baptism, nevertheless the Catholic prince can (indeed is bound to, if he can conveniently do it) lawfully force all his unbelieving subjects indirectly and not in combination, that is, that they should either convert or be struck with fines or exile.

This applied only to those who were already subject to a Catholic monarch. It was not only dry passages of canon law that Caron adduced in support of this position. Elaborating on the kind of indirect force that a Catholic prince might apply to unbelieving subjects, Caron also made use of the example of the Jews of Rome:

> *Et ita hodie Romae Iudaei coguntur sub poenis, vt concionatorem Catholicum certo hebdomadis die audiant et admittant: expellique iure possent qui non conuerterentur, si pontifici placuisset, nisi forte aliqua specialis interuentio impediat.*
>
> *Caron 1660: 43–4*

> And thus today the Jews of Rome are forced under threat of penalty that they should receive and attend a Catholic preacher; and by law those who do not convert could be expelled if it were to please the popes, unless perhaps some special intervention were to impede it.

The Jews of Rome were confined in a Ghetto from 1555, and compulsory preaching was established in 1584: Caron was keen to align his theory of mission not just with Canon law and theories of mission, but with Catholic practice (Campbell 2022; Aron-Beller 2019; Michelson 2017; Stow 1977).

The pope, however, was not just another Catholic prince; he was also the vicar of Christ and as such had a special right (and obligation) to preach the Gospel:

> *Non potest papa vel princeps Catholicus infideles non baptisatos nec subditos punire, nisi in vno casu quo promulgationem Evangelij in suis terris impedirent, aut positiuam iniuriam Christo, Ecclesiae, vel Catholicis irrogarent. Ratio: quia alias nec principis sunt subditi, nec Ecclesiae: Quid enim mihi de iis qui foris sunt, iudicare inquit Apostolus. Cuius ergo authoritate poterit eos punire? Quia tamen Pontifex Romanus lege diuina, et vi officij ius habet praedicandi euangelium omni creaturae,*

> *ideo quemcunque ius hoc impedientem, per se vel suos, iuste poterit inuadere et punire, vt ius suum contra invasorem defendat. Nec aliter pontifices, principes haereticos deponunt vel infideles, quam pro defensione iuris suis, aggressorem aggrediendo.*
>
> *Caron 1660: 46–7*

> Neither the pope nor a Catholic prince can punish unbaptised unbelievers who are not subjects, unless they should impede the promulgation of the Gospel in their lands, or inflict a positive injury on Christ, the Church, or Catholics. The rationale: because they are not otherwise subjects of those princes nor of the Church: 'For what is it to me to judge those who are without' says the Apostle [1 Corinthians 5.12]. By whose authority then will they be punished? However, because the Roman pope, by divine law, and the force of his office, has the right of preaching the Gospel to all creatures, he therefore can justly invade and punish whomsoever impedes this right, in order to defend his right against those who would obstruct it. Popes may not depose heretical or unbelieving princes other than by defending their right of attacking the aggressor.

Unbelievers of whatever kind thus had no right whatsoever to impede Catholic preaching and the pope could authorize military action against those who tried to do so. At this point Caron considered an objection: was it not the case that (by his bulls of 1493) Pope Alexander VI had commanded King Ferdinand of Spain to occupy the lands of the American unbelievers, despite the fact that those peoples had not yet resisted the preaching of the Gospel? Caron responded that the pope had not transferred the lordship of the Americas to Ferdinand, but first asked him to arrange the promulgation of the Gospel, and if the unbelievers were to resist this (as in fact they did), then the king should occupy their lands (Caron 1660: 48).

Unbelievers who were not subject to Catholic secular power could not be forced to attend preaching, according to Caron:

> *Infideles istos extraneos non posse cogi, vt Euangelium audiant vel credant, modo non impediant . . . Iudaei autem Romae compelluntur audire, quia subiiciuntur Romano Pontifici tanquam dominio temporali.*
>
> *Caron 1660: 47*

> These foreign unbelievers cannot be forced that they should listen to or believe the Gospel, so long as they do not impede it . . . For the Jews of Rome are compelled to listen because they are subject to the temporal lordship of the Roman pope.

As part of this general model of evangelization Caron did support the traditional Scotist position that a Catholic prince should baptize the children of unbelieving subjects even without parental consent, so long as it might be ensured that the children would not afterwards be corrupted in the faith or even killed (Caron 1660: 58). All of this added up

to a hard version of the *ius praedicandi*, 'right to preach'– a charter, especially for the Franciscans, to go where they wanted and preach how they wanted.

A number of Caron's positions on the power of the prince in spiritual matters were distinctive. Caron believed that the Catholic prince had a certain power in spiritual affairs, and he formulated this in a way quite different to the Thomist norm:

> *Dices: potestas principum in subditos infideles vel est ciuilis vel ecclesiastica. Si primum quomodo ad spiritualia se extendat? Si secundum quomodo in paganos execeri posset, cum ante baptismum Ecclesiae non subiiciantur? Respondeo, esse ciuilem, nec nisi ad ciuilia directe extendi, vt scilicet vnio, pax et securitas reipublicae conseruetur; et quia vnitas religionis ad hoc est medium necessarium ideo separatos ab hac vnitate mulctat et expellit Papa vero vel episcopi possunt directe ob ipsam haeresam subditos haereticos, etiam et hospites expellere ex suis territoriis: quia ipsa haeresis pacem Ecclesiae directe tolit et conturbat, vel saltem periculo exponit. Quod si Ecclesia id per se non posset, brachio saecularis principis vti poterit, modo tamen maius inde malum ex circumstantiis non eueniat.*
>
> *Caron 1660: 44*

> You say: the power of the prince over unbelieving subjects is either civil or ecclesiastical. If the first, in what manner does it extend to spiritual things? If the second, in what manner could it be exercised over pagans, since they are not subject to the Church before baptism? I respond that the prince's power is civil, and does not extend to ecclesiastical things unless directly related to civil things, in order that the unity, peace and security of the commonwealth should be conserved; and because the unity of religion is the means necessary to this, therefore the prince fines and expels those who are separate from this unity. Indeed the pope or his bishops can directly expel heretical subjects and strangers from their territories on account of heresy, because that heresy directly harms and disturbs the peace of the Church, or at least places it in danger. But if the Church cannot do this by itself, the secular arm of the prince can be used at least so that a greater evil does not emerge from those circumstances.

This indirect power of the prince in spiritual matters (not named overtly by Caron, but only implied through contrast with direct powers) was not a power derived in some way from the Church but was apparently inherent to princely power itself. Caron reinforced this position when refuting objections to the obligation of the prince to confiscate children for baptism:

> *Si dixeris baptismum sacramentum esse spirituale adeoque extra spheram principis secularis, respondeo principem etiam de spiritualibus cognoscere, quatenus paci Reipublicae et securitati sunt necessaria; tunc enim sunt quodamodo mixti fori; et ita sacrilegia punit.*
>
> *Caron 1660: 59*

> If you say that the sacrament of baptism is spiritual and so outside the sphere of the secular prince, I answer that the prince also examines spiritual matters, in so much as they are necessary to the peace and security of the commonwealth, for then they are in a way mixed forums, and thus the prince punishes sacrilege.

This indirect princely power in spiritual affairs was quite different to Thomist characterizations of the relationship between state and Church. The Thomists walked a thin line. On the one hand, they wished to insist that the origins and purposes of civil government were natural and not spiritual, so that governments, whether Catholic or Protestant, would not seek to usurp the powers of the Church and the pope. On the other hand, they insisted that Catholic monarchs were obliged to assist the Church in persecuting heretics within their jurisdictions. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine's formulation was that 'the temporal authority must be servant to the spiritual authority and protect and defend it from its enemies' (Bellarmine 2012: 85). Francisco Suárez wrote that 'coercion, with respect to those deeds which are opposed to religion and to the salvation of the soul, is essentially a function of spiritual power', but that the spiritual power might avail itself of 'the ministry of its temporal arm that all things may be done decently, in order and efficaciously' (Suárez 2015: 797).

Caron's book, the *Apostolatus Missionariorum*, was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by a decree of 22 November 1661 (Alexander VII 1667: 8). Bujanda's usually reliable edition of the Index is mistaken here: it was the later 1660 edition, not the shorter 1653 edition that was forbidden until corrected (Bujanda 2002: *s.v.* Caron). Caron's book had been denounced in the Index because it contradicted many decrees of Propaganda Fide on the powers of missionaries (ADDF, 1655–4: fol. 105v–107v). When the reports of the censors were made, it is clear that Caron's very exalted notion of the power of missionaries, perhaps fed by his political experiences, but certainly grounded in his hard Franciscan interpretation of the *ius praedicandi*, 'right to preach', was a serious problem (ADDF 1657–64: fols 82–3, 84–85v, 86–88v, 90r–96r). The report by Michelangelo Ricci, better known as a mathematician and later a cardinal, remarked bluntly that Caron subjected the Church to the authority of kings and emperors (ADDF 1657–64: fols 86–88v; Bustaffa 2016). And Caron's typically Scotist defence of the prince's obligation to baptize Jewish children was also identified as something that would have to be removed (ADDF 1657–64: fols 82–83). So, there was clearly a measurable, institutional difference between the Scotist and Thomist doctrines on these points.

Irish Franciscans and sacred travel: conclusions

The *ius communicandi* – the natural right to travel, independent of any divine command – was a typical subject for discussion among Dominican and Jesuit scholastics. The existence of this right was bound into the strong Thomist doctrine of natural law and had its origins in Roman law. By contrast, the *ius communicandi* does not seem to have been particularly important to the Scotist theologians at Rome in the seventeenth century. Scotists often

regarded both the command of God and the command of the secular prince as more important than natural law. Their privileging of the command of God was demonstrated in their support for the forced baptism of infidel children. Their privileging of the command of the secular prince was demonstrated by their support for the breaking up of slave marriages. They were sceptical of using the violation of natural law as a justification for war. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Franciscans' rivals, including the Dominicans and Jesuits, applied more and more pressure against the Scotist theology, so that it was Thomist theology, with its strong category of natural law, that prospered in the Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But these Scotists provide us with an alternative tradition of analysis of the European state system – a more authoritarian tradition than that of the Dominican and Jesuit theologians who have long been familiar to Anglophone scholars. Just as the Franciscans themselves were driven by sacred duty to travel outside Ireland in the service of their brotherhood and the Church, so the kind of journey on which they focused in their theological writings was not the secular travel enabled by the *ius communicandi*, but the sacred travel protected by the right of preaching.

* The author of this chapter does not subscribe to the political views expressed in the foreword of this book.

Notes

1. The classical style of Bonaventure Baron was discussed by Jason Harris at the conference on 'Irish Migrations and Classical Antiquity' in November 2022.
2. Translations from Latin in this chapter are my own, unless otherwise stated.

CHAPTER 8

TIOCFA SÉASAIR CLANN CHOLLA, 'THE CAESAR OF CHOLLA'S RACE WILL COME': EXILES AND HOMECOMINGS IN EARLY MODERN GAELIC POLITICAL POETRY

Gregory R. Darwin

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, as is well known, a time of profound political, social and religious upheaval for Ireland (see, e.g., Covington, Carey and McGowan-Doyle 2019). The efforts made by Tudor and Stuart monarchs to expand and consolidate royal authority and impose religious reform resulted in the defeat, dispossession and displacement of many powerful Gaelic families, along with Gaelicized Old English ones (see also Levin, Chapter 6, this volume). As indigenous Catholic elites were replaced by English-speaking Protestant subjects loyal to the British crown, Gaelic intellectual institutions collapsed in the absence of aristocratic patronage. In response to these crises, many nobles and intellectuals left Ireland (often never to return) in search of education, patronage and support from other Catholic nations on the Continent. Others sought to advance their fortunes, or at least secure their positions, by converting to Protestantism and collaborating with the English project of 'civilizing' Ireland.

The predominant medium for political discourse in Gaelic Ireland during the later medieval and early modern periods was verse, especially the highly formal and formalized compositions of the hereditary professional poets known as *filí*.[1] Poems were addressed to aristocratic patrons on matters of public importance: celebrating inaugurations and victories; lamenting deaths and defeats; and inciting patrons towards, or cautioning them against, various courses of action. The large body of extant bardic verse therefore constitutes an invaluable, if somewhat underused, source for Gaelic elite mentalities of the later medieval and early modern period (Simms 1987; Caball 1998a; Kane 2010; Kane 2019).

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *filí* began to make greater use of classical Graeco-Roman narratives (Simms 2013; Darwin 2021). This use of classical material ranged from brief allusions to historic places and events, to similes likening their patrons to the great men of the past, and lengthy allegorical retellings of both well-known and recherché stories in support of the poem's argument. Such allegorical narratives, commonly referred to as bardic 'apologues' (Ó Caithnia 1984), allowed poets to make extended, and at times ingenuous, comparisons between the lives and deeds of their patrons and the worlds of the ancient Mediterranean.

More often than not, access to classical material was mediated through Middle Irish translations or adaptations of canonical texts such as *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 'The

Wanderings of Aeneas' (Calder 1907), based on Virgil's *Aeneid*; *In Cath Catharda*, 'The Civil War' (Stokes 1909), based on Lucan's *De Bello Civili*; and *Togail Troí*, 'The Siege of Troy' (Stokes 1881, 1884), based on the late antique prose account *De excidio Troiae historia*, 'History of the destruction of Troy', attributed to Dares Phrygius (Meister 1873; see relevant chapters in Clarke, Poppe and Torrance 2024). As these adaptations had existed in Irish for centuries, the increased use of classical material by *filí* cannot simply reflect the availability of these texts; instead, I argue that *filí* were drawn to classical material because it provided a rich domain of metaphors for exploring the increasingly transnational and migratory experiences and identities of Gaelic elites in the period.

In the following discussion, I present examples of poems in which the perambulations of patrons – both horizontally through space and vertically across hierarchies of power and influence – are likened to accounts of exiles and homecomings from Graeco-Roman narratives. As we will see, most of these poems reference the events of Caesar's civil war, or the Trojan War and its aftermath, narratives which were not only well known within Gaelic literature, but which also enjoyed canonical status within the broader context of Renaissance Europe.

The Gaelic patron as Caesar or Pompey

In 1567, the Hebridean chief, Somhairle Buidhe Mac Domhnaill (Sorley Boy MacDonnell), landed in Marketon Bay and established a lasting Mac Domhnaill presence in Antrim. In response to this event, the Sligo poet Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn addressed a poem, *Fada cóir Fódla ar Albain* ('Long has Fódla [i.e. Ireland] had a claim upon Alba [i.e. Scotland]'), to Mac Domhnaill in support of his expedition (forty-three quatrains; text Knott 1920: 173–9; translation and notes Knott 1921: 115–19, 264–6). By appealing to Mac Domhnaill's putative Irish ancestry, as a descendant of one of the legendary Three Collas of fourth-century Ireland, Ó hUiginn presented the expedition as a righteous homecoming, and Mac Domhnaill as the chosen spouse of Ireland, who will free her from foreign occupation.[2] To support his argument, Ó hUiginn relates a 'story' which he had 'read in an ancient parchment' (*sgéal bheanas le crú Cholla / do léigh sinn i seanrolla*, ll. 69–70). On a military expedition in Spain, Julius Caesar encountered a woman in distress – a personification of Rome, who begged Caesar to return and free her from foreign occupation. Just as Caesar returned home to liberate Rome, so too does Mac Domhnaill return to his ancestral territory:

Do-bhéara Banbha, bean Chuinn	Banbha [i.e. Ireland], spouse of Conn,
do bhreith na Rómha romhuinn,	like Rome of old, will bring
a fear féin ó Mhoigh Mhonaidh,	her own man from the Plain of Monadh
ag soin céill a gcualabhair.	that is the meaning of what ye have heard.
Ar aghaidh mheic Mheic Domhnuill,	MacDonnell's son sees before him
feadh éagcaoine a hanfhorluinn,	in a vision, ere he falls into slumber,

do-chí an Bhanbha bhfairsing bhfinn	fair and generous Banbha
d'aisling suil tarla i dtoirchim.	bewailing her oppression.
Mac Alastoir d'fhurtacht cháigh	Even as Caesar came, the son
tiocfa, mar tháinig Séasair,	of Alastar will come now
don dulasa fa Bhóinn Bhreagh,	to the Bregian Boyne to aid everyone,
slóigh nách urusa d'áireamh.	with a following difficult to number.
Sluagh Shéasair mar rug fan Róimh –	Even as Caesar's hosts won to Rome,
tre Ghort Luirc, líon a dtionóil,	through Lorc's Field, with the full muster of his following,
tiocfa Séasair clann Cholla,	will come the Caesar of Colla's race,
barr do dhéasaibh díoghloma.	the pick of a choice gleaning.

ll. 125–40; trans. Knott 1921: 118

The source for this account is an episode in the first book of Lucan's *De Bello Civili* (1.183–94), which was included in the Middle Irish adaptation *In Cath Catharda* (Stokes 1909: ll. 402–16). There are, however, some key differences: in Lucan's account, Caesar had his vision prior to his fateful crossing of the Rubicon, and the personification of Rome implored him *not* to cross the river. This account, of course, would not have supported Ó hUiginn's argument, so instead he presented a version which bolstered Mac Domhnaill's ambitions and which drew upon the long-established motif in Irish literature of the ruler as chosen spouse of the land, personified as a woman (Toner 2018). In doing so, Ó hUiginn's poem prefigures the *aisling* (vision) poetry of subsequent centuries, in which a personified Ireland bemoans her state and longs for an absent Scottish saviour (Ó Buachalla 1996).

The motif of patron as Caesar *redivivus* appears again in the apologue (the allegorical narrative drawing upon a historic or mythic antecedent) of the anonymous poem *Rug cosnamh ar chrích Midhe* ('He has defended the territory of Meath'; thirty-six quatrains; text McManus and Ó Raghallaigh 2010: 577–8; partial edition and translation Ó Háinle 2015: 97–102). This poem was addressed to Thomas, fourth Viscount Dillon of Costello-Gallen (1615–73). Dillon was the scion of an Anglo-Norman family who converted to Protestantism upon reaching the age of majority, and for most of his career he was an active supporter of the crown's interests in Ireland, and served in the royalist military. The poem welcomes Dillon's return from London, and may have been written either in 1644, after he had travelled to London to deliver a remonstrance to Charles I, or in 1660, after Charles II had restored his lands to him. As in Ó hUiginn's poem, Caesar returns to Rome in order to liberate it from foreign occupation:

Le Séasar na sleagh n-arsaidh	In that important battle Pompey
torchair Poimp san bpríomhchor-soin;	was killed by Caesar of the well-tried spears.
le a ghníomh éidigh ar fhud áigh	By his terrifying deed in battle

tug a héigin an Eadáill.	he freed Italy from tyranny.
Tug Séasar ó sin a-mach	Caesar protected Rome
cosnamh ar Róimh na ríoghchlach,	of the royal buildings from then on:
triath dob inghill feadh foghla	he was a lord who, during an armed attack,
ar inghrim fhear n-allmhordha.	was reliable against the ravaging of foreigners.
Coiseónaidh Séasar sluaigh Bhreagh	Thus will the Caesar of the men of Breagha,
mar sin sealbha na sinnsear,	a strong, brave hero of smooth spears,
beithir lonn chleathghlan chalma,	protect the property of the ancestors
do neamhthal dhrong ndanardha.	in spite of foreign hosts.
Uíocont Goisdealbhach, gnúis shéimh,	What is the Viscount of Costello, of gentle
ciodh acht aithShéasar eiséin	countenance, the wonderful hawk-like warrior,
le díon a thíre ar thoghail,	but another Caesar to protect
an ghríobh shídhe sheabhcomhail.	his country from destruction.

ll. 105–20; trans. Ó Háinle 2015: 101

The constant references made to the 'defence' (*cosnamh*) of territory underscore the fraught historical background to the poem, composed during or in the aftermath of the Confederate Wars (1641–53). Unlike Ó hUiginn, the poet makes no appeal to his patron's Gaelic ancestry as a source of legitimacy; indeed, the poet's decision to make use of an extended comparison with Julius Caesar may in part reflect the incompatibility between such traditional modes of praise and his patron's political aspirations (cf. Leersen 1994: 48). Depending on when the poem was written, the equation of Dillon with Caesar may also reflect an invocation of another kind of *Romanitas*: after his failure to recapture Athlone Castle in 1646, Dillon converted back to the Catholic faith. If this poem was written in 1660, then the portrayal of Dillon as defender of Rome may have been intended to call attention to his return to the faith, and perhaps act as a subtle criticism for his earlier, politically motivated, conversion.

Along with Caesar, poets might also draw comparisons with his main enemy in the civil war, Pompey. One such example of this occurs in a poem by the Antrim poet Fear Flatha Ó Gnímh addressed to Toirdhealbhach Ó Néill, titled *A Thoirdhealbhaigh, turn th'aigneadh* ('Toirdhealbhach, turn your mind'; incomplete; twenty-seven surviving quatrains; text McManus and Ó Raghallaigh 2010: 20–1; partial edition and translation Ó Háinle 2015: 116–23). In 1642, Toirdhealbhach Ó Néill received orders from General Feidhlim Ó Néill to march into Donegal and engage with Scottish planters who had settled near the river Finn (Ó Háinle 2015: 116–17). Ó Gnímh urged him to disregard General Feidhlim's orders, arguing that Ó Néill must accept the current reality of foreign rule. Although he no longer controls all of his ancestral land, he must nonetheless learn to accept what he still has, lest his ambition lead him to ruin. In support of this, Ó Gnímh points to the example of Caesar's enemy Pompey who, after his defeat at Thessaly,

travelled to Lesbos in a small boat in order to return to his wife, Cornelia. The general's former military prowess is contrasted with his current state:

Rí dhá dtrian an bheatha bí	The general who [had been] ruler of two-thirds
cuirthear feacht n-aon an t-ardrí	of the living world was once sent from the bosom
lucht curcháin mar nár chreidthe,	of the plain of Africa with a mere currach-crew,
a hucht urchláir Aifreice.	unbelievable though that be.
Fa di-áirmhe riamh reimhe	Up to that very time
gus an uair-sin d'áiridhe	innumerable on the sea was
ar slios tonn dá loingeas lán	his full fleet of ships to which
long dá nár choimeas curchán.	a small currach was not comparable.
Sgaoilid puible Poimp Mháighe;	The tents of Pompey the Great are struck;
uathadh dá aos combháidhe;	his confederates [are] few; only a poor wretch
deibhleán re a ais dá n-anadh	would not find his humbling grievous,
neimhleán lais dá laghdaghadh.	if he were to remain by his [Pompey's] side.

ll. 69–80; trans. Ó Háinle 2015: 121

If Pompey could endure so great a reversal of fortune, so too could Ó Néill learn to suffer his own lot. Ó Gnímh's presentation of events is rather sparse in details, which suggests that he expected his audience to be familiar with, at the very least, the basic narrative of the Roman civil war. Pompey's flight to Lesbos and his reunion with Cornelia are recounted in book eight of Lucan's *De Bello Civili* (8.1-108); curiously this is not included in any of the extant copies of *In Cath Catharda*. Although Ó Gnímh might have had access to a more extensive version of *In Cath Catharda* now lost to us, he may have also drawn upon another work, perhaps Lucan's poem itself (cf. Ó Háinle 2015: 96–7). The absence of Pompey's later flight to Egypt and his subsequent death by treachery (*De Bello Civili* 8.329-454, 536-636) is noteworthy, as one might expect the poet (and perhaps his patron) to have been familiar with these details. This omission may have been deliberate: a means of underscoring the delicate situation in which the patron finds himself – further emphasized by the poet's repetition of *cumhang*, 'narrow, constricted', and similar terms – and the perils of failing to heed the poet's advice.

The sack of Troy and its aftermath

The sack of Troy and the fate of her people after the death of their protectors was a fairly popular theme for poets, especially in laments. It appears in a poem by Fear Flatha Ó Gnímh, *Mo thruaighe mar táid Gaoidhil* ('I pity the wretched state of the Gaels'; twenty-four quatrains; text O'Rahilly 1927: 144–7), written some time after the so-called

'Flight of the Earls' of 1607, when Aodh Ó Néill (Hugh O'Neill), Rudhraighe Ó Domhnaill (Rory O'Donnell) and other Ulster aristocrats fled to the Continent to seek the aid and patronage of other Catholic monarchs. Rather than following these rulers into exile, Ó Gnímh's poem imagines the fate of the Irish in the absence of their would-be protectors. He likens them to the Túatha Dé Danann of Gaelic tradition, the biblical Israelites and the people of Troy:

Mar lucht na Traoi ar n-a toghail	As the people of Troy, after its destruction,
dá ndíchleith i ndiothrabhaibh,	are in hiding in the desolate places,
fian Teamhra a-táid ó Thailtin;	so the warriors of Tara and Teltown
a bhfáid sealbha seachaintir.	are evicted from their hereditary lands
Cosmhail re Cloinn Isra-hél	Like the children of Israel
thoir san Éighipt ar éidréan,	were oppressed in Egypt to the east,
mic Mhíleadh um Bhóinn a-bhus	so the sons of Míl [the Irish] here around the Boyne
ag síneadh dhóibh ó a ndúthchas.	are dispersed from their patrimony.
Mar do bhí Magh Tuireadh Thuaidh	As Moytura in the North
i ngeall mhic Céin an chéaduair,	was in great need of Cian's son [i.e. Lugh Lámhfhada, king of the Tuatha Dé Danann]
lá a sgarthana re teidhm dtinn,	on the day of their relief from dire affliction
feidhm an athLogha ar Éirinn.	Ireland needs a second Lugh.
Ag sluagh Éireann an fheóir ghloin	A pity that the hosts of green-grassed Ireland
truagh gan ionamhail Eachtoir	do not have the likes of Hector,
mic Prímh re pobal Saxan,	son of Priam, who would be a match
cogadh dhíbh go ndiongbhatsan.	for the Saxon race in battle.

ll. 61–76; translation my own

Such poetic responses to the Flight of the Earls constituted a 'minor genre' in their own right (Ó Macháin 1998: 2). Another poem on the same theme, *Anocht is uaigneach Éire* ('Tonight Ireland is desolate') has a complex textual history. Three versions of the poem survive, in five manuscript witnesses, attributed to two different poets: Ainnrias mac Marcuis and Eoghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird (Ó Macháin 1998: 2–5; the version attributed to Ainnrias is twelve quatrains, edited and translated by Knott 1916; the version attributed to Eoghan Ruadh is twenty-eight quatrains, edited by Ó Raghallaigh 1930: 242–50; another anonymous version of thirty quatrains is preserved in University of Göttingen MS Hist. 773). Common to all three versions of the poem are the following quatrains, in which we see the same juxtaposition of Gaelic, biblical and classical tradition in order to convey the gravity of this event:

Ón chruthsa ar cuireadh Gaoidhil	From this state into which the Gaels have been cast
ní bhiaid feasda forbhfaoilidh—	henceforth they will have no joy at any tidings,
fada leanus an léan dáibh—	be they ever so excellent;
re sgéal dá fheabhus d'fagháil.	long does sorrow persist with them.
Rug orra, ní cóir a cheilt,	They have been overtaken, it is not just to suppress it,
an bhroid do bhí 'san Éigeipht,	by the captivity that was in Egypt,
nó an líon fan dTraoi do thionóil,	or the army which gathered about Troy,
nó an sníomh do bhaoi ar Bháibhiolóin.	or the sorrow that was in Babylon.
Ó tá an cuan um chrích bhFeimhin	Since the sea surrounds the land of Feimhen [i.e. Ireland]
an bhroid cionnus chuirfidhir	how shall the bright fair-haired race
don fhréimh naoi-si chéibhfhinn Chuinn	of Conn be succoured from captivity,
'sgan Maoisi i nÉirinn aguinn?	whilst we have no Moses in Ireland?

ll. 33–44; text and trans. Knott 1916: 193–4

The fall of Troy again appears as the subject of the apologue to one poem, *Síon choitcheann cumha Ghaedheal* ('The grief of the Gael is a disaster for all'; forty-five quatrains; text McManus and Ó Raghallaigh 2010: 604–5), where the focus is on the subsequent wanderings of Aeneas. Written upon the death of Donnchadh Ó Conchobhair Sligigh (O'Connor Sligo) in 1609, the poet likens him to Aeneas through experiences of dispossession, exile and repatriation. Ó Conchobhair Sligigh's history was complex. In 1588, Richard Bingham, governor of Connaught, blocked Ó Conchobhair's inheritance and claimed his lands for the crown (O'Rorke 1889: 131–41). Later that year, Ó Conchobhair travelled to London to petition for redress, but was imprisoned for several years under charges of conspiracy. In 1596, Queen Elizabeth I granted him permission to return to most of his territory, and appointed him governor of Sligo. He immediately came into conflict with the rebel leader Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill (Red Hugh O'Donnell) of Tír Chonaill, and in 1598 he found himself shut out of his territory and forced to seek refuge in Munster where his wife, Eleanor Butler, owned some territory. In 1600, he surrendered to Ó Domhnaill and aided the rebel forces, but was imprisoned in Esk Castle in 1601–2 when Ó Domhnaill discovered that he was colluding with the Crown. In 1604, at the end of the conflict, Ó Conchobhair was pardoned and knighted for his loyalty, and spent his remaining years engaged in various legal cases in order to buy back his estate and defend his title.

The poet likens Ó Conchobhair's fate to that of Aeneas:

Fúair go foirceann a re(a)imhis	Until the end of his life, he had the struggle
sníomh Aengheas mic Aine(a)icis	of Aeneas, son of Anchises;
tarla d'ursan fhuinn Meadhbha	the same yoke of fate befell
cuing cosmhuil a chinneamhna.	the heir to Meadhbh's territory [i.e. Connacht].

ll. 97–100; translation my own

Like Aeneas, Ó Conchobhair was displaced many times by war, and met untold strife and hardship until he came into the territory allotted to him by fate. Also like Aeneas, Ó Conchobhair died peacefully (in 1609), with his earlier troubles now long behind him:

Beatha ⁊ bás an chéidfhir	The life and death of the aforementioned man [Aeneas]
beag leaghthar da leitheidibh	– seldom is read of its like.
tarla rinn ar séd samhail	We have encountered its like after the death
ar n-ég chinn O cConchubhair.	of the chief of the Ó Conchobhair.
Gan lot áirm gan f[h]eidhm ndocrach	Aeneas died without wounding of arms,
bás Áeneas gerbh iongontach	without grievous battle; although it was wondrous,
ar chor nach diomolta a dhul	more wondrous still was the way Donnchadh died,
ionganta dul do Donnchadh.	in a way not unworthy of praise.

ll. 137–44; translation my own

In this example, as in the poem addressed to Viscount Dillon, the poet must contend with the fact that a patron has cooperated with the interests of the Crown against those of other Gaelic rulers. Unlike the address to Dillon, this lament also emphasizes Ó Conchobhair's identity as an aristocratic Gael: references to genealogy and place abound, and the sentiment of the first line – that his death is a cause of sadness for all Gaels – is repeated throughout the opening quatrains of the poem. While the author of the address to Dillon may have regarded his patron's collusion with royal power as incompatible with such traditional modes of praise, as suggested above, Ó Conchobhair's opportunism seems to have posed no such difficulties for his eulogist. This may reflect Ó Conchobhair's ongoing legal troubles regarding his estate: the poet sought to support his patron's claims by appealing to both native genealogy and neoclassical civility.

Greek homecomings from the Trojan War

The best-known homecoming from the Trojan War, that of Ulysses, forms the apologue of *Fuigheall formaid fonn Sligidh* ('The territory of Sligo is an object of envy'; forty-three quatrains; text McManus and Ó Raghallaigh 2010: 347–8), by the Fermanagh poet Eochaidh Ó hEodhusa. The poem is addressed to Domhnall Ó Conchobhair Sligigh (Donnell O'Connor Sligo, d. 1611), brother of the Donnchadh Ó Conchobhair discussed above, on the occasion of his succession as chief of Sligo after his brother's death in 1609. Ó hEodhusa employs the familiar conceit of the patron as chosen spouse of the territory, and weds it to the account of Ulysses' homecoming and reunion with Penelope. As in the Homeric account, Ulysses returns home in disguise, and at first is unrecognized by his household or wife:

Iuil-iséis d'éis a dhecrach	Ulysses, after his hardship,
tig a n-égcruth ilrechtach	came over the shore of the bright sunny sea
tar slios an ghrianmhara ghil	in a false guise of many shapes
d'fios an fhialbhrogha or imthigh.	to inquire about the royal dwelling whence he came.
. . .	
Peneloipe cidh í ann	Although Penelope was there
nír aithin é acht go hionmhall	she did not recognize him until after much time:
fedh a ré re ces cumhadh	as long as she was suffering from grief,
do mhes gan e d'aontughadh.	she did not imagine she would be reunited with him.
Do chasaoid cúis a deora [leg. deacra]	She complained to him of the reason for her hardship
ris tar éis a aithennta	after she had recognized him;
do commaoidh do thaoibh threise	she told the strong-sided one
forraoin gach aoin uirrei-se.	of the injury everyone had done to her.
Dioghlu[i]s a ndernadh uirthe	That which had been done to her was avenged,
linge[i]s lucht a baoghluighthe	those who had done her harm fled;
a cédchoire ar ttecht dá tigh	after her lordly husband [?] had returned to her home
terc rer bfhedfoighe a n-áirimh.	they were scarce to be counted.

ll. 133–52; translation my own

Ulysses represents Domhnall, who had spent much of his life abroad, fighting in the Spanish army, prior to his return home (O'Rorke 1889: 140–1). Penelope, the woman who had long suffered (*fada do fuilngedh*, l. 105) on account of the war, and was hounded by would-be suitors, stands for the territory of Sligo, still ravaged by war and beset with opportunistic land claims by the likes of Governor Bingham and Sir William Taafe during Donnchadh's tenure. The poem ends on an opportunistic note, presenting Domhnall as the one to restore Sligo to its former glory after years of destructive conflict (*ar loitsiod Goill is Gaoidhil*, l. 165).

While a version of the return of Ulysses to Penelope existed in the Middle Irish *Merugud Ulixis meic Leirtis*, 'The Wandering of Ulysses son of Laertes' (text and trans. Meyer 1886; text Meyer 1958; see also Hillers 2024), some of the details of Ó hEodhusa's account, such as the presence of the suitors and the spelling *Iuiliséis* for 'Ulysses', are at odds with the Middle Irish version and suggest that the poet drew upon a source in another language, perhaps English (cf. Darwin 2021: 232). While this choice of a foreign source might indicate nothing more than that the Middle Irish text was not available to

Ó hEodhusa, it is tempting to speculate that his patron's international experiences might have prompted the poet to draw upon a version of the story which was closer to Homer's account, either as a display of his own erudition, or out of a desire to tell a version of the story which would have been more familiar to his patron.

Another, less-known, Greek homecoming forms the apologue to a later poem, *Malairt chrotha ar chrích Luighne* ('The land of Luighne has changed her appearance'; fifty-eight quatrains; text and translation McKenna 1951: 258–75). The poem is an inauguration ode, written near the end of the seventeenth century by Maol Muire Ó hUiginn for Oilill mac Cormaic Óg Ó hEadhra of Annaghmore, Co. Sligo. Ó hUiginn drew upon the familiar conceit of the ruler as the rightful spouse of the land: the Ó hEadhra's ancestral territory is a fair maiden faithfully awaiting her betrothed. The land has become bleak and barren, but upon Oilill's succession, its beauty and productive power has been restored. In order to demonstrate this, the poet retells the tale of Demophon and Phyllis: Demophon was a prince of Athens who fought in the Trojan War; on his voyage home he stopped in Thrace, where he fell in love with and married Phyllis, the daughter of the Thracian king. After a while, Demophon was compelled to return to Athens but promised to return shortly. He failed to do this and, in her grief, Phyllis was transformed into a tree. The tale is best known from the second letter of Ovid's *Heroides*, although the poet mostly likely used, whether directly or indirectly, Servius' late antique commentary on Virgil (Ó Caithnia 1984: 132). In Ó hUiginn's account, when Demophon returns to Thrace, he sees this tree and embraces it, upon which it bursts into bloom. The poet explains the allegory:

'S é ua n-Oilill an fearsa;	That man is Oilill,
's í críoch Ceara an ainnearsa,	that maid is the Land of Ceara, as we see from
ler sgeth doirneimh ccaoimh ccorcra	all the bright purple golden beauty which blossoms
do chraoibh móirShléibh Mhucholta.	forth for the powerful and gentle Branch of Mucholta [i.e. Oilill]
Do phós tusa ar ttosach ruibh	Thou, O Prince of Conghar, did first espouse
na trí Luighne, a fhlaith Conghair,	the three Luighne lying around
mun ttolaigh saoir ttaoibhfhinn ttais;	the noble fair-sloping fruitful hill;
dob aoibhinn daoibh 'n-a díoghrais.	she was charming to thee in her devotedness.
Táinic treimhse 'n-a dheaghaidh	Some time afterwards there came
umhlocht ort ón ccinneamhain,	a command to thee from fate
ón ríoghdhacht saoir ngéigil nglain	ordering thee to separate from
gurbh éigin daoibh bhur ndeaghail.	thy noble free splendid kingdom.
Dod easbhaidh gur éag sisi	Owing to the wasting grief of her wooded plains

– créd sin fearacht Filisse –	she suffered a strange change,
le maothbhrón a magh ndoireach	and so she died for want of thee;
do ghabh claochlódh comhoidheach.	thus she imitated Filis [i.e. Phyllis].
Iar bhfilleadh duit 'n-a dhiaigh so,	When afterwards thou, O Demophon
a Dhemophon cláir Cheara,	of the Plain of Ceara, didst return to her,
do cheil sí a héccruth ort,	she hid her disfigurement from thee;
ní bhí ag éagnach ar th' amharc.	she complains not of thy appearance (as rescuer).

ll. 3287–306; trans. McKenna 1951: 269–71

This narrative is not, to the best of my knowledge, attested in any extant Irish-language source from the seventeenth century or earlier; therefore, Ó hUiginn most likely adapted it from another language, perhaps Latin or English (Ó Caithnia 1984: 132; Simms 2013: 147). Like his earlier kinsman Tadhg Dall, Maol Muire Ó hUiginn showed considerable creativity in adopting the received narrative to conform to existing literary conventions regarding sovereignty. The poet, unfortunately, tells us very little about Oilill's circumstances prior to his succession: he left his patrimony on account of an *umhlacht* ('order', l. 3296), but we are not told from whom this order came, where Oilill went (elsewhere in Ireland, England or the Continent?), when he left or how long he was absent. If Ó hEadhra had left Ireland at a young age or been absent for a considerable length of time, the choice of a classical apologue, rather than one drawn from the native tradition, might have been an attempt to address his patron using an antecedent which would have been more familiar to him (Simms 2013: 143). The choice of apologue may have also allowed the poet to subtly critique his patron: despite coming into bloom upon Demophon's return, Phyllis remains a tree, and the damage done by Demophon's *doighníomh*, 'evil deed', cannot be entirely undone (l. 3254). Further indications of the poet's displeasure can be seen in his repeated exhortations to Ó hEadhra to remain faithful to his patrimony and not to seek out new lands farther afield (ll. 3307–42).

The 'Flight of the Earls' and the First Trojan War

In the version of the Trojan War narrative presented by pseudo-Dares Phrygius, which enjoyed canonical status in medieval Ireland and elsewhere in Europe, and was the primary source for the medieval Irish *Togail Troí* ('The Siege of Troy'), Troy was first sacked by Hercules under the reign of King Laomedon. Laomedon's son and heir, Priam, rebuilt the city, and ruled over it for many years before Agamemnon and his allies laid siege to, and ultimately destroyed, the city. This prelude to the more famous sack of Troy figures prominently in the following two poems, both written by a poet who accompanied his patrons to the Continent during the Flight of the Earls in 1607.

When Cú Chonnacht Mag Uidhir accompanied Ó Néill and Ó Domhnaill into exile, the Donegal poet Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird composed *Mór an lucht arthraigh Éire*

('A heavy ship-load, Éire herself'; thirty-nine quatrains; text and translation McKenna 1926). The poem dwells on the ship which bore Mag Uidhir to Spain, and invests it with soteriological significance. It is 'Noah's ship or one like it' (*long Naoi nó a aithghin oile*, l. 75): just as Noah's ark preserved humanity from the Flood, so does the ship preserve the Gaelic aristocracy 'from the angry Deluge of the Goill [i.e. the English]' (*ar dhílinn feirge fian nGall*, l. 97). Mac an Bhaird then imagines the ship as an instrument of vengeance: it is the *Argo* which bore Jason, Hercules and other heroes to sack Troy under the reign of Laomedon. Looking forward to a Gaelic restoration, the poet envisions the exiled Gaelic aristocracy meeting the violent depredations of these 'foreigners' in kind:

I luing Argho – anba an rath—	In Argo's ship – wondrous fortune –
do-chuaidh an ghasradh Ghréagach	went the Greek heroes,
caor chonfaidh fa teo tionól	a furious fast-gathering band,
dá dtorchair leo Laimheadhón.	and by them fell Laomedon.
Bárc nar bh'fhéidir righe ria	From that unrivalled barque
aisde do hionnradh Aissia	Asia was plundered
le neart slóigh ghasraidhe Gréag,	by the Greek heroes' strong host
amhsaine as cóir do choimhéad.	– a hosting ever memorable.
Innte do-chuaidh cian ó shain	In it journeyed of old
an lucht do b'fhearr d'fhuil Ádhaimh	the noblest of Adam's blood
ag dul do thaghail na Traoi;	speeding to capture Troy;
cur 'n-a aghaidh ní fhéadtaoi.	to resist them was not possible.
Caithréim eile amhla sain	Another such hosting shall be made
do-ghéantar más fhíor d'eolchaibh	– if prophets speak true
le géagaibh Moighe Midhe,	by the heroes of the Plain of Midhe,
Gréagaigh oile a n-aimsire.	other Greeks of their day.

ll. 117–32; trans. McKenna 1926: 474

Similar equations between Gaels and Greeks are ubiquitous in bardic verse, echoing an earlier medieval doctrine that, unlike other European nations which claimed descent from Troy, the Irish were descended from Greece (Darwin 2021: 226; Jaski 2003; Moran 2015; Fomin, Chapter 4, this volume). Mac an Bhaird develops the comparison further: the Irish are 'other Greeks of their day' and, like the Greeks who sailed with Hercules to sack Troy for the first time, have the power to avenge insults to their honour with deadly force. That these Greeks attacked and defeated the Trojans, who had played a prominent role in the origin legends of Britain for centuries, is difficult to ignore.

A similarly optimistic note pervades another poem by Mac an Bhaird, *Fogus fortacht don tír thuaidh* ('Help is near to the North'; fifty-two quatrains; text and translation McKenna 1927), written *c.* 1608 for Aodh Ó Domhnaill, the infant son of, and heir to, Rudhraighe Ó Domhnaill, who along with his father was in exile in Rome. The younger

Ó Domhnaill is the prophesied saviour of Ireland, whose arrival will restore justice, prosperity, the faith and Gaelic rule to the island. His youth is no obstacle to his success: in support of this argument, the poet cites the examples of Cú Chulainn, Fionn Mac Cumhaill, Conaire Mór and other precocious youthful heroes from Irish tradition. When the poet imagines the restoration of Ireland, he evokes the first sack of Troy:

I mbrón na Traoi tarla ciall	When Troy lay helpless
an tann-sa do bhaoi gan bhríogh	there was good cause for her grief;
múradh a clach damhna déar	the razing of her walls was sad;
tarla léan do rath a ríogh.	ruin fell on her princes' fortune.
Fóir Gréag iar ngabháil na Traoi	After her capture, the Greek host
dá hanáir nochar fhéach sí	regarded not her honour;
dá port úr do b'eagar clé	her fair fort was in disorder
do leagadh lé go húr í.	and cast by them to the ground.
Bile réidh dá fiodhbhaidh féin	Yet a smooth tree of her own wood
is é do b'ionchuir dá huaim	was able to build her again;
an obair do bhí gan bhrígh	the work that had been undone
do thogaibh Prímh hí ar n-uair.	Priam raised up again.
Toigéabhaidh toimse na múr	Aodh will raise the castle's heights
toigéabhaidh toighe na naomh	and build the saints' houses,
tulach sgaith-mhín Dá Thí thiar	and Dá Thí's soft-flowered Hill;
dí ar dtriall budh aith-Phrímh Aodh.	he shall come and be another Priam for it.
Cosmhail re cóirgheadh na Traoi	Like Troy's rebuilding
mar fhóirfeas ar Tulaigh dTé	shall be his saving of Té's Hill;
tír 'n-a loighe tír Dá Thí	may he be a second Priam
dí go mbadh Prímh oile é.	for Dá Thí's afflicted land.

ll. 129–48; trans. McKenna 1927: 471

In contrast with the more familiar (at least to a modern reader) Homeric image of Priam as an old man, begging for the body of his son, Mac an Bhaird presents Priam as a youthful king in his prime, full of promise. His reign presaged new life for the city after a destructive war, just as Ó Domhnaill promises new life for Ireland. While the apologue concludes with the restoration of Troy under Priam, Troy's later destruction under his rule hovers in the shadows. This unstated, yet significant, detail might betray the poet's inability to imagine a world other than one of constant, small-scale warfare, in which even a relatively prosperous and peaceful reign might end in violence. Despite the promise of these quatrains, there is no evidence that Ó Domhnaill ever returned to Ireland or attempted to reclaim his ancestral territory.

Greek and Roman analogy combined

The final poem to be discussed here is another work by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird, *Teasda Éire san Easbáinn* ('Ireland has perished in Spain'; sixty-nine quatrains; text and translation Breatnach 1973). The poem was written upon the death of Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill, who voyaged to Spain in 1602 in order to petition Philip III for aid. This attempt was unsuccessful, and Ó Domhnaill died of a fever later that year. The poet identifies Ó Domhnaill's fate with that of Ireland, and in the opening quatrains repeatedly calls attention to the fact that Ó Domhnaill died far from home, in Spain. The poet invokes historical precedent: while the fifth-century Irish kings Niall Naoighiallach and Dá-Thí mac Fiachrach had died abroad, along with Donnchadh, son of the eleventh-century high king Brian Boru, Ó Domhnaill's death is a far greater cause for grief. Ireland is now without a ruler and lacking protection, and the very landscape mourns his passing. The poet likens Ó Domhnaill to Conn, Conaire Mór and Cormac mac Airt, three other pre-eminent early Irish kings, and then offers an extended comparison with Hercules:

Re hucht mbáis do iarr Earcail,	When dying, Hercules,
sciath an ghrégshluaigh ghuaisbhertaigh,	the shield of the Grecian host,
a airm ghleóidh do char re a chois;	requested that his battle-arms be put beside him;
fa dheóigh níor an 'na n-égmhais.	in the end he did not remain without them.
A bhfert Earcail, mar do iarr,	The prince's arms about which blood was spilt,
do cuiriodh uile ar é[i]nrian	his gear of battle and of victory
airm fhlatha far feradh fuil,	were put all together into Hercules' tomb,
a threalamh catha is cosgair.	as he had requested.
Rug Éire fan líg 'nar loigh –	Hugh is not like Hercules. He has carried
ní hionand Aodh is Earcail;	Ireland under the stone where he has lain.
an uile ghlóir budh glóir linn	All that glory which we deemed as glory
do shóidh mar thuile ag tuitim.	has changed about, falling like a flood.
Giodh ionann ní hionann sin;	Though he is the same he is not the same:
taobh re harmaibh níor imdhigh;	he did not depart while at arms;
rug ar mbuaidh fhíre 'na fhert	he has carried from us into his grave
's an ríghe uainn a n-é[i]nfheacht.	at once both our true victory and the kingship.

Íomháigh gan anam Éire;	Ireland is a lifeless image.
do chuaidh glóir shíl shaoirChréidhe	The glory of the race of noble Créidhe has vanished
re cois chodhnaigh Chaithreach Sreing,	along with the champion of Sreang's fortress
aithchreach do fholmhaigh Éirinn.	– a further pillage that has emptied Ireland.

ll. 129–48; trans. Breatnach 1973: 41

Ó Domhnaill is 'the other Hercules of his time' (*Earcail eile a aimsire*, l. 126) and a suitable heir to the hero in respect to strength and martial skill. Hercules was the pre-eminent warrior of his time and, as a Greek, distant kin to Ó Domhnaill, just as Niall and Dá-Thí were. Like Ó Domhnaill and many of the Gaelic kings mentioned in the poem, Hercules travelled and adventured far from the land of his birth in pursuit of his interests.

It is unclear what Mac an Bhaird's ultimate source for this account was. Hercules' death is mentioned in *Stair Ercuil ocus a Bás* ('The History of Hercules and his Death'; text and translation Quin 1939), a late fifteenth-century adaptation of Raoul LeFèvre's romance, *Recoeil des Histoires de Troyes* ('Compilation of the Histories of Troy'; text Aeschbach 1987), although there is no mention in this text of Hercules being buried with his weapons. It is possible that this account may have been taken from a version of *Togail Troí*, in which Hercules plays a significant role in the early sections; alternatively, this account may be pure authorial invention. While most bardic apologues emphasize similarity and analogy, Mac an Bhaird emphasizes the dissimilarity between the two situations: 'Hugh is not like Hercules' (*ní hionand Aodh is Earcail*, l. 138).[3] Hercules' tomb, along with his 'gear of battle', serves as a monument to his glory; while the burial of Ó Domhnaill with his weapons underscores the final nature of his passage and the sorry state of Ireland in the absence of her greatest defender.[4]

Following these lines the poet offers a second apologue, this time comparing his patron with Julius Caesar. After ten years on campaign throughout Europe, Caesar returned to Rome where he fought Pompey the Great, and seized the sovereignty of the world from him. Despite their great efforts, neither Caesar nor Ó Domhnaill lived long enough to enjoy the fruit of their labour:

An toice tar éis an áir	After the slaughter fortune
luach a shaothair do Shésáir	did not grant Caesar the reward of his effort,
ní thug, acht an cath do chor;	but only that he should fight the battle:
ad-bhath sul tug a thoradh.	he died before he reaped its reward.
Do fhulaing Aodh, anba an crádh,	For ten years Hugh, like the king of the Romans
deich mbliadhna mar rígh Rómhán	(great the misery) endured the heat of combat

teas gliadh is gruamcholbha glend	and the gloomy recesses of valleys
do mhian uamchobhra Éirenn.	for the sake of aiding and unifying Ireland.
D'Aodh Ó Dhomhnaill, codhnach cáigh,	Like Caesar, after the champion of all
dʼéis buaidh do bhreth mar Shésáir,	Hugh O'Donnell had won victory
caor bhuaidh ó bhraoinlios na bhFionn	the victorious hero from the dewy fold of the fair
do chuaidh ó aoibhnios Éirionn.	departed from the enjoyment of Ireland.
Ní fhuair go fóill fiach a ghníomh	He did not get the reward of his deeds
ó nach raibhe a n-áit airdríogh	because he was not in the place of High-kings,
idir mhaithibh fuile Floind	seated among the nobles
'na shuidhe a gCathair Chrobhaing.	of the Irish race in Tara.

ll. 197–208; trans. Breatnach 1973: 44

As with his account of the death of Hercules, it is unclear what source Mac an Bhaird drew upon, as *In Cath Catharda* does not include the death of Caesar. Ó Domhnaill's stated aim of 'aiding and unifying Ireland' (*do mhian uamchobhra Éireann*, l. 204) is also somewhat incongruent with the aims attributed to Caesar in *In Cath Catharda*, where the civil war is presented as the result of interpersonal conflicts between Caesar and Pompey. Caesar, however, did enjoy the position of supreme authority in Rome for a year between his victory and his assassination, and unlike Ó Domhnaill, he died in Rome rather than abroad on campaign. It is unclear whether Mac an Bhaird was ignorant of these details, or whether he simply considered them to be less important than the analogy which he was trying to draw between his patron's untimely death and the career of one of the foremost military commanders of the ancient world.

Presenting dispossession and exile through Graeco-Roman exempla: conclusions

The upheavals and progressively more transnational experiences of Gaelic and Gaelicized Old English elites during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries created complicated questions of identity. Elites were defined not only by their situation within a kin-group and that kin-group's position within a larger genealogical framework within the poetic-historical tradition, but also increasingly as subjects of English law, and by their status within the courts of English and European monarchs. The heightened interest in Graeco-Roman material shown by professional poets in this period correlates directly with contemporary political shifts. Several reasons can be adduced for the

increased significance of classical antiquity in early modern Gaelic political poetry. On the one hand, this development reflects the greater intellectual 'sophistication' of their patrons, whose experiences abroad brought them into contact with classical influences in Renaissance Europe. At the same time, the long history of engaging with classical narratives in the Irish language created a natural resource for early modern Irish *filí* to draw upon.

Poems on classical themes were addressed to patrons of both Gaelic and Anglo-Norman background, and to both loyal subjects of the crown – and on occasion to the crown itself (Breatnach 1977–8) – and to inveterate rebels. While poets did often allude to the putative Greek ancestry of the Gaelic people (Darwin 2021: 226), the direct comparisons made between patrons and the heroes of Graeco-Roman antiquity do not seem to suggest a direct genealogical connection, as Gaelic patrons are also often likened to famous Trojans or Romans. The fact that the heroes of the most widely available narratives from the ancient Mediterranean had no obvious genealogical connection with Gaelic or Norman dynasties was undoubtedly attractive to many poets, as it allowed them to praise patrons who had no such connections themselves, or whose activities and ambitions made it difficult to praise them within the traditional frame of reference of bardic verse. On the other hand, many poems combined classical allusion with more traditional modes of praise, along with references to scripture. These multiple modes of praise, I suggest, reflect a sensitivity on the part of poets to the multiple political worlds in which their patrons operated.

Allusions to the events of the Trojan War, and comparisons with its major players, are the most frequently encountered category of classical reference in early modern Irish political poetry. As noted above, the sufferings of Ireland in the period are often identified with those of Troy after its destruction. In laments, comparisons with Hector, the doomed defender of Troy, are quite common (Darwin 2021: 209–10, 226). Patrons are also frequently likened to Greek heroes such as Ulysses and Hercules, and while the supposed Greek ancestry of the Gaels is alluded to constantly in poetry of the period, poets did not explicitly call attention to possible genealogical links when comparing their patrons with such heroic figures. Indeed, the fact that Donnchadh Ó Conchobhair Sligigh could be likened to Aeneas while his brother, Domhnall, could be likened to Ulysses, implies that bardic poets did not intend for such comparisons to signal any genealogical connection. Instead, I suggest that narrative traditions surrounding the Trojan War provided a rich source of metaphors which had resonances outside the context of Gaelic learning, and which could be applied to both Gaelic and Old English patrons with ease.

The frequent comparisons made with Julius Caesar, whether in the form of brief similes or extended apologues, are rather striking to modern readers who may think of recent Irish history as one of resistance to empire. To early modern poets and their audiences, however, such comparisons elevate Irish elites through association with one of the most storied military commanders of history, and imagined connections with imperial Rome refute colonial tropes of Irish barbarity. Often implied, and sometimes stated outright in such comparisons, is the idea that Ireland is a type of Rome. In the

decades following the Reformation, Catholicism becomes a crucial element in a new Irish identity which could accommodate those of both Gaelic and Old English descent (Mac Craith 2006). Irish clerics on the Continent, along with lay exiles, played a crucial role in forging this identity through the printing of theological works and larger historical projects such as Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* ('Foundation of Knowledge on Ireland') and the creation of the *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* ('Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland', also known as the 'Annals of the Four Masters'). These invocations of *Romanitas*, then, have a potential contemporary resonance: signalling an affinity with the glories of the past as well as a sectarian affiliation with the present-day Church of Rome. Poets, much like their patrons, looked to the Continent and to the Catholic great powers, sometimes – but not always – in vain, for inspiration, succour and hope.

Notes

1. Standard introductions to the corpus of later medieval and early modern Irish and Scottish Gaelic professional poetry include Knott 1920–1; Greene 1961; Bergin 1970; Ó Cuív 1973a; Ó Cuív 1973b; Thomson 1990: 19–56; McManus 2004; Caball 2006; and Simms 2009. For introductions to metrics and language, see Knott 1957 and McManus 1994, respectively. A comprehensive literature review can be found in McKibben 2019.
2. The Three Collas were, according to tradition, three brothers who lived in Ireland in the fourth century. One of the brothers, Colla Úais, held the high kingship of Ireland for a number of years before he was deposed and the brothers exiled to Scotland; they later returned and founded the kingdom of Airgíalla (Dinneen 1908: 354–71; see also Schlegel 1998). On the motif of king and land as spouses, see also Levin Chapter 6: 99–100 in this volume.
3. In the best-known account of Hercules' death, that found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (9.89-272), the hero is cremated on the peak of Mount Oeta, in Greece. Ó Domhnaill, on the other hand, died and was buried abroad; that the poet did not call attention to this point of difference suggests that his source may not have specified where Hercules died. Alternatively, the poet's knowledge of the geography of the ancient Mediterranean may have been imperfect.
4. The poet notes that, unlike Hercules, Ó Domhnaill 'did not depart while at arms'. It is tempting to read this in light of the later idea that Ó Domhnaill was poisoned, although Breatnach (1973: 31–2) indicates that there is no contemporary evidence for this. As the anonymous reader pointed out, Hercules can hardly be said to have died 'while at arms' in the conventional account of his death, in which he is given a poisoned shirt by the unwitting Deianira; this further supports the notion that Mac an Bhaird was unfamiliar with Ovid's version of the story.

PART III
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VOYAGES, REAL AND IMAGINED

CHAPTER 9
CLASSICIZING THE GAELIC: VISUAL CLASSICISM, MIGRATION AND IRISH MANUSCRIPT CULTURE

Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh

Ireland is remarkable – although not entirely unique – in a European context for its retention of a continuous, vibrant culture of the vernacular manuscript book right until the end of the nineteenth century, well into the post-print period.[1] The study of the relationship between Irish manuscripts and print in this period, 'after the Gutenberg press', has come under increasing scholarly scrutiny in recent years, with very fruitful results (Kelly and Mac Murchaidh 2012; Driscoll and Mac Cathmhaoil 2021). The primary focus of most of these studies has been the 'migration' of text between these media, reflecting the traditional textual focus of Irish-language scholarship. This chapter contributes to recent developments in Irish manuscript studies by largely stepping back from the concept of text entirely. Instead, I will focus on visual aspects of Irish manuscripts. While there is a fairly extensive body of scholarly literature on visual aspects of medieval Irish vellum manuscripts, including illustration and decoration (Henry and Marsh-Micheli 1976; Ralph 2014; 2018; Ó Macháin 2016; 2018a; 2021), the visuality of later, paper manuscripts of the post-print period has attracted less attention. In an important contribution to our understanding of decoration in later Irish manuscripts, Ó Macháin (2018b: 203–4) has noted that post-print manuscript decoration is most often a point of divergence from the inherited tradition of Irish manuscript decoration and can be seen as a reflex of increased contact on the part of Irish scribes with the printed book and its attendant culture. In this chapter, I interrogate the effect of this increased contact between Irish manuscripts and print on the visuality of the Irish manuscript book.

Taking the broad but distinctive notion of the 'classical', this chapter examines some of the range of visual classicisms that are found in Irish-language manuscripts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, looking also at their impact in the nineteenth century in the later part of the discussion. It will be demonstrated that this borrowing of classical iconography found in Irish manuscripts is mediated through engagement – via print culture – with the classicizing tendencies of a number of major European cultural movements: the Renaissance, the Baroque movement and Romanticism. Many of the scribes dealt with in this chapter were migrants and, indeed, the migration of people is of relevance for the visual culture of the Irish manuscript book, but that is only one type of migration examined here. These visual classicisms take us across real and imagined

borders of place and time as well as across media (epigraphy, manuscript, print and even fresco), telling us something about the nature of the manuscript book in Irish in the period after print.

The 'gateways' to the Renaissance book

While one can trace the origins of the title page and the frontispiece to the production of medieval manuscripts (Ó Macháin 2021: 306–7), their use takes on a transformative and new importance, regularity and formality in the age of print, which itself is to be reckoned an important element in European Renaissance culture (Calè 2019; Fowler 2017: 5). Renaissance- and Baroque-style title pages and frontispieces were heavily indebted to the iconography of Graeco-Roman monuments and architecture, so that from the Italian humanists of the fifteenth century onwards, the use of architectural motifs in the paratextual forms of books becomes ever more common (Corbett 1964: 48–62; Bertram et al. 2021). Just as the great classically inspired doorways of Renaissance and Baroque Europe draw the eye into the splendour of a building, so too do these 'gateways' to the Renaissance book invite the reader 'to step into the depths of the book' (Emmons 2016: 78).

In terms of Irish-language book culture, the most obvious manifestation of this same style is the Irish-language translation of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*, which was printed in Dublin in 1608 (Ó Macháin 2021: 297, n. 29). This title page is an imaginative ensemble of architectural and decorative elements of classical iconography brought together to create a Renaissance niche-like structure (see Figure 9.1). Two protruding corbels support a coffered arch with rosettes, integrating the scallop decoration, all classical features typical of Renaissance niches. Beneath this and placed centrally on the page is the book's title in a mixture of Roman and Gaelic typeface. At the head and foot of the title frame are two grotesque (*grotteschi*) masks flanked on either side of the title by two smaller lion masks holding festoon-like ribbons in their mouths. Below this central circular frame is a smaller rectangular cartouche at the foot of the page presenting the publishing details of the book. The symmetrical layout and classical iconography are here, in an Irish-language printed book, arranged in a way that is typical of the Renaissance (and subsequently Baroque) title page elsewhere in Europe (Fowler 2017: 16).

An example of a Renaissance title page design used by an English author – which nonetheless gained currency in Ireland – is that used in Edmund Spenser's *Complaints*, printed in London in 1591. In Spenser's title page, standing as pillars on the left and right framing the text of the title page are characters clearly reminiscent of David the psalmist with his lyre and Moses with the tablets (see Figure 9.2). In the upper portion of the page is an image associated by David Roy (2017: 21) with Aeolus, the Greek god of wind. The title page is not unique to this book. David Roy (2017: 22), who has examined its iconography in detail, has noted that the same title page design used by Spenser in 1591 also features in a number of printed books of the 1580s. Most interesting for present

Figure 9.1 Title page, *Leabhar na nUrnaightheadh gComhchoidchiond*, 'The Book of Common Prayer' (1608). Image courtesy of the Royal Irish Academy.

purposes, however, is that just over a century later we see elements of this design incorporated into the title page of an Irish-language manuscript book: University College Dublin, O'Curry MS 15 (see Figure 9.3). That manuscript contains a copy of a quintessentially Irish text: Geoffrey Keating's synthetic history of Ireland, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* ('A Foundation of Knowledge on Ireland'), a work only completed in the 1630s and here copied in manuscript form by the Dublin scribe Uilliam Ó Loinsigh in the year 1698. In Ó Loinsigh's elaborate title page, David and Moses are retained under their canopies while much else has changed. One still sees the general symmetry and framing techniques one expects from Renaissance title pages, but the detail of decoration has also been expanded by the scribe-artist beyond what is seen in Spenser's title page. This is most obviously the case in Ó Loinsigh's integration of elaborate scrollwork, architectural motifs such as corbels with elements of the grotesque such as the cherubic faces found on the flower-filled vases.

Figure 9.2 Title page of Edmund Spenser's *Complaints* (1591).

Ó Loinsigh is one of the many understudied Irish-language scribes of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. He was a member of the Ó Neachtain circle of scribes active in Dublin, a group dominated by the scribe and author Seán Ó Neachtain, who had migrated from Roscommon to Meath in the wake of the land confiscations of the seventeenth century before eventually settling in Dublin (Mac Mathúna 2021). Ó Neachtain's authorial, intertextual dexterity allowed him to make copious use of classical literature in his writing, often through his reading of Renaissance authors such as Rabelais in English translation (Mahon 2000). Be that as it may, and despite his being dismissed by scholars such as Robin Flower (1926/1992: 19) for his 'not impeccable Irish', it is Ó Loinsigh rather than any of his contemporaries who stands out in regard to the deployment of decoration in his manuscripts. This is most especially evident in his incorporation of classical iconography into manuscript design.

An even more obviously classicized title page than the one used for Ó Loinsigh's manuscript containing *Foras Feasa* is that found in London, British Library, Egerton MS 196. Penned by Ó Loinsigh in Dublin in 1688, tellingly, Egerton 196 contains material

Figure 9.3 University College Dublin, O'Curry MS 15, title page. Courtesy of UCD Special Collections.

excerpted from two books printed by the Irish Franciscans in exile in Louvain, in the Spanish Netherlands: Antoin Gearnon's *Parrthas an Anma* ('Paradise of the Soul', Louvain, 1645) and Seán Ó Dubhlaoich's *Teagasg Críostaidhe* ('Catechism', Louvain, 1663). Ó Loinsigh's manuscript challenges the dichotomy sometimes assumed to exist between print and manuscript as distinct media.[2] Containing textual material from printed books, not only has the scribe imitated the initials and other instances of decoration from *Parrthas an Anma*, he has also pasted printed engravings from other (possibly Netherlandish) devotional books into the manuscript at relevant points (Flower 1926/1992: 587). Ó Loinsigh's title page, however, is not taken from a printed volume, nor is it a cutting from a printed book, although it was doubtlessly inspired by examples Ó Loinsigh had seen in print. It consists of a pen-and-ink drawing depicting a scene immediately reminiscent of Baroque funerary monuments not uncommon in printed title pages of the period (see Figure 9.4). The scene depicts a partially obscured architectural structure akin to a tomb with its classicizing putti and fluted base. They

Figure 9.4 London, British Library, Egerton MS 196, title page, folio 1r. © The British Library Board.

hold up a fringed cloth which serves to frame the text of the title and some rudimentary bibliographical detail: '*Leabhair Urnaighthe Uilliam Uī Loinsigh a mBaile Ātha Cliath 1688*' ('William Linch's Prayerbook, in Dublin, 1688'). This is a scene and style of title page very much in line with those appearing in printed title pages throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Fowler 2017: 18–21). The highly decorative nature of Ó Loinsigh's title pages are not typical of Irish manuscripts of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century and yet they are consistent features of the manuscripts of this individual scribe. Moreover, as demonstrated below, Ó Loinsigh's attention to the visuality of his manuscripts was not limited to title pages.

Trinity College Dublin MS 1335 and the *Orlando Furioso*

From the perspective of visual culture generally, but especially in the context of Irish engagement with Renaissance-mediated visual classicism, one of the most fascinating of Ó Loinsigh's manuscripts is Trinity College Dublin MS 1335, written in 1697 for the Welsh antiquarian and scholar Edward Llwyd. As well as a short Irish grammar, the manuscript contains the Arthurian-style romance *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* ('The Adventure of Melora and Orlando'), which is indebted to Ludovico Arisoto's sixteenth-century Italian epic *Orlando Furioso* (Mhac an tSaoi 1946; Carroll 2001: 69–90). As a product of the Italian Renaissance, *Orlando Furioso* emerged from an intellectual environment intensely interested in the classical world and was inspired by classical sources (Carroll 1997; Palmer 2013: 64). The Irish reflex of this Italian epic in Ó Loinsigh's manuscript bears only very loose structural similarity to the Italian in narrative terms (Byrne 2019: 352). Whatever structural similarity there may be, one can no doubt attribute this to Sir John Harington's translation of the Italian into English verse first published in 1591. Eight years later, in 1599, during a brief military sojourn in Ireland on behalf of the Elizabethan state, Harington presented a printed copy of the translation to the young sons of the Irish Gaelic lord and rebel Aodh Mór Ó Néill (Hugh O'Neill), Earl of Tyrone, who read the translation to their father (Carroll 2001: 76; Palmer 2010: 75). Gaelic aristocratic readers were not cut off from the world of European book culture. Both the title page of the original Italian and Harington's English translation conform to our expectations of Renaissance title pages in terms of classicism (Fowler 2017: 94–7). Indeed, Harington's translation has been described as 'the most ambitious [English] book illustrated with metal plates in the [sixteenth] century' (Pollard 1893: 249).

While there are great textual and narrative divergences between the Irish and Italian texts, Clare Carroll (2001: 75–83) and Mícheál Mac Craith (2017) have drawn attention to a number of striking visual parallels between Trinity College Dublin MS 1335 and Harington's 1591 translation. A number of fine pen-and-ink drawings in the manuscript attempt to reproduce scenes first created by the celebrated Italian engraver Girolamo Porro (active 1567–99) for the Venice edition of 1584, and reproduced for Harington's translation. These original scenes of Porro's include detailed depictions of classical architecture. In Figure 9.5, for instance, there is a symmetry to Porro's image as the foreground is cut in half by a natural stone column, dividing the image into two distinct scenes and leaving our focus on two pairs of characters. In the left-hand scene, an Ionic colonnade surmounted by Ionic pilasters surrounds a type of altar and, offset, there a niche containing a classical-style sculpture. In the scene on the right, a Corinthian arcade provides the backdrop. While Ó Loinsigh's imitation (see Figure 9.6) lacks much of the sophistication and perspective of the Italian image, there can be no doubting its indebtedness to it.

Elsewhere in the manuscript other visual classicisms are evident, ones which are not so easily explained as deriving from the visuality of the English or Italian 'original'. The most striking example is a headpiece, not within the text of *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* as such, but rather over the first part of an Irish grammar which is also found in

Figure 9.5 John Harington, *Orlando Furioso*, 1591, Plate 3.

the manuscript. The headpiece features the image of Medusa, set in elaborate scrollwork, at its centre, flanked by two knights on horseback dashing off in opposite directions (see Figure 9.7). One might be tempted to dismiss this header as simply decorative, without any meaningful relationship to the texts contained in the manuscript. That might be to underestimate the Irish scribe. The head of Medusa is a well-known and common motif in classical and classicizing art and Medusa's classical identity, as it was known from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was well known throughout Europe in medieval and early modern literature, culture and art (Karoglou 2018). This classical identity was susceptible to being moulded by medieval and early modern authors seeking 'inspiration for moralizing allegories and courtly romances' (Fischer 2017: 20–1). Thus 'Medusa

Figure 9.6 Uilliam Ó Loinisgh, *Eachtra Mhelóra agus Orlando* ('The Adventure of Melora and Orlando'), 1697, Trinity College Dublin, MS 1335, p. 24.

represented evil and vice generally, but especially lust and covetousness, against which men must fight to save their souls' (Fischer 2017: 22). David Leeming (2013: 34), in particular, has drawn attention to scenarios where Medusa – 'a de facto femme fatale' associated with carnality and worldliness – is set up as a contrast to Perseus, a male paragon of reason and morality. This contradistinction between Medusa and Perseus is clearly articulated by none other than Harington himself in his preface to the 1591 English translation of *Orlando Furioso*, where, as Leeming describes (2013: 34), 'Harington creates a particularly detailed allegory based on a tradition that held that, after slaying Medusa, Perseus was raised up to Heaven. According to Harington, Perseus

Figure 9.7 Trinity College Dublin, MS 1335, p. 75.

can represent "the mind of man being gotten by God, and so the childe of God, killing and vanquishing the earthliness of this Gorgonicall nature", after which the mind "ascendeth up to the understanding of heavenly things".

This headpiece featuring Medusa at its centre, framed with decorative floral scrollwork whose tendrils seem to envelope the two knights even as they attempt to escape, demonstrates the scribe's engagement with Harington's allegory (rather than with *Orlando Furioso* itself). Although scholars such as Flower (1926/1992: 19) might have seen Ó Loinsigh's decoration as mere 'crude drawings', we have here a manifestation of our scribe's engagement with European Renaissance classicism, and an instance of the textual, paratextual and visual complementing each other.

Script as image

The Renaissance saw the merging of the textual and the visual in more ways than one. From the fifteenth century onwards, Italian humanism saw the classical inscriptions of ancient Rome reborn and transposed to other media (Sparrow 1969: 12). New engagement with, and interest in, ancient Roman inscriptions resulted in experimentation with typefaces. Printers in this period deployed a more epigraphic style of typeface, one which was well suited to the classicism of Renaissance frontispieces and title pages. A case in point is the 1608 printing of the *Book of Common Prayer* in Irish, discussed above, where the text of the Irish-language title is printed in two styles of typeface: *capitalis monumentalis* or Roman square capitals with a Gaelic typeface following (see Figure 9.1). The advent of the printing press and the circulation of printed works in multiple languages provided some Irish scribes – especially those living in Dublin – with a greater variety of models for scripts. The use of differing scripts also allowed scribes to draw the viewer's visual attention to their use of Latin (and in other cases, English), even if that viewer was not a reader as such.

Uilliam Ó Loinsigh's manuscript prayer book, London, British Library Egerton MS 196, provides a further case in point. In the body of the book, Ó Loinsigh distinguishes occasional Latin words and phrases from his Irish text by using a Roman script and draws attention to the difference by using a red ink (see Figure 9.8). The script used by Ó Loinsigh for Latin is based on the Roman-style typeface whose origins lie in late fifteenth-century Renaissance Italy, itself inspired by fresh engagement with classical sources and inscriptions (Davies 2004; Morrison 1943: 26). Clearly distinguishable from the Gaelic script, the Roman-style script Ó Loinsigh uses is characterized by sharp straight lines and serifs. This script is deemed appropriate for Latin by the scribe, but also serves to draw the reader's eye to the Latin. The alternation of language and script is accompanied by a change in the colour of ink, thus highlighting not only the multilingual nature of the manuscript, but the range and repertoire of the scribe who produced it. We have here both a feature of the book for visual consumption and an advertisement of scribal versatility and skill.

Notably, an earlier example of the same phenomenon, though without colour differentiation, is found in the mid-sixteenth-century manuscript known as the 'Nugent Primer' (see Figure 9.9). That manuscript was created by the Irishman Sir Christopher Nugent for Queen Elizabeth I; in another migratory context, Nugent met the Queen while he was studying at Clare Hall, Cambridge. The manuscript makes use of four script styles for different purposes. A Gothic script is deployed as a display script in certain parts of the manuscript, while three other scripts are used in language-specific contexts for providing lexical equivalences for Irish, Latin and English respectively. Gaelic script is used for the Irish, an italic script is used for the English words glossing the Irish, and a Roman script, broadly comparable with the one used by Ó Loinsigh, is used to render the Latin (Ó Macháin 2012: 135). Again, the script deemed suitable by the scribe for Latin is a Roman one.[3] This one style of script in the multilingual Irish manuscript is ultimately derived from Renaissance engagement with both older Latin manuscript

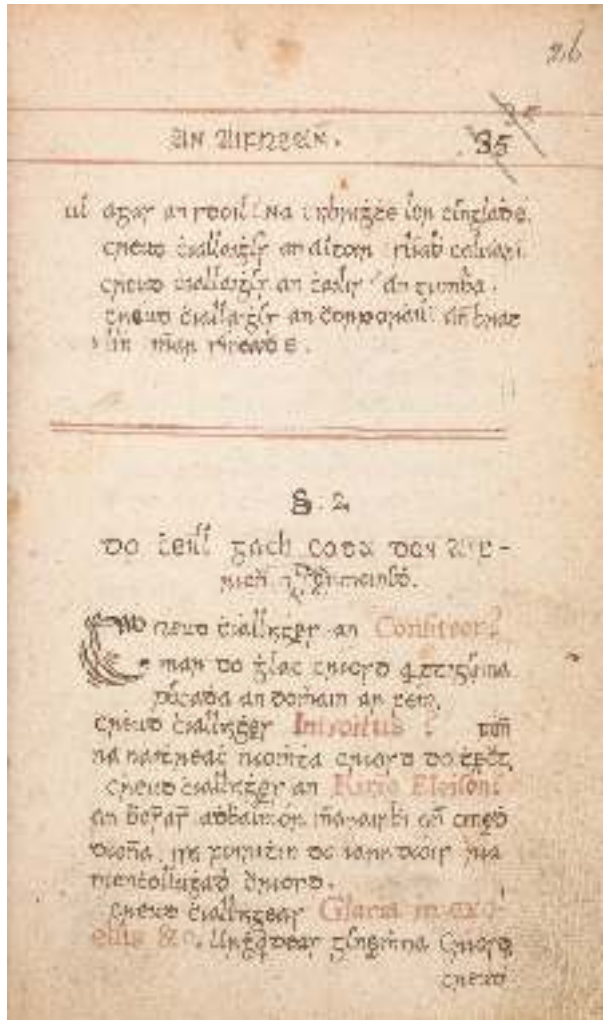

Figure 9.8 London, British Library, Egerton MS 196, folio 4r. © The British Library Board.

material and ancient Roman lapidary inscriptions, mediated through print in a process (from inscription and/or manuscript to print, to manuscript) which disrupts the usual technological progressivism with which so much book history in 'major' European languages is infused.[4]

If one can identify epigraphically inspired styles of Roman script in Irish manuscripts as a type of classicism mediated through Renaissance printed books, it is also possible to note the migration of Gaelic script into epigraphical (or faux-epigraphical) Renaissance contexts mediated through Irish manuscripts. The College of St Isidore in Rome became a centre of Irish Franciscan activity from the seventeenth century onwards, housing an exiled Catholic elite and functioning as a centre of religious learning (on the Irish

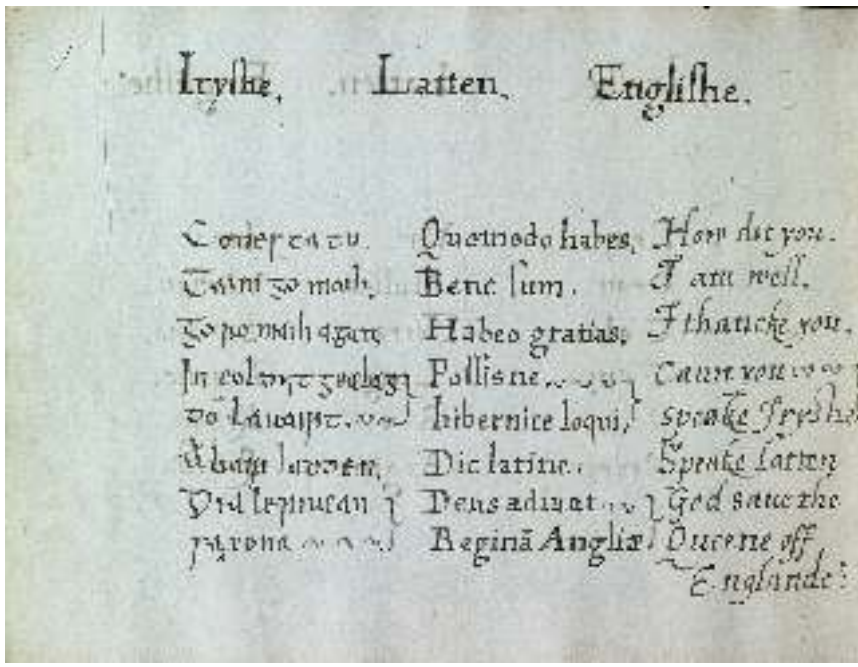

Figure 9.9 Dublin, Benjamin Iveagh Library, Irish 'Nugent' Primer, folio 10v. By permission of the Governors and Guardians of Archbishop Marsh's Library.

Franciscans, see also Campbell, Chapter 7, this volume). The visuality of St Isidore's rewards scholarly attention, and both Clare Carroll (2017) and Mícheál Mac Craith (2015) have made invaluable contributions to our understanding of the complexity and density of the messages communicated by the art and architecture of the college, especially in relation to the frescos found in the Aula Maxima. In the present context, however, most interesting is the fresco over the entrance to the Aula Maxima, which contains a line from Psalm 110 (see Figure 9.10):

> *Initivm Sapientiæ, timor Domini, Psal[m].*
>
> Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom

Although it is a fresco, there is an attempt to 'classicize' the Latin text by representing it as though it were an inscription – the Latin letter forms are based quite clearly on the Roman *capitalis monumentalis*. In this sense, it is typical of the frescos inside the Aula Maxima, and of inscriptions emulating classical Roman models in Renaissance art more generally (Sparrow 1969: 38–92). Indeed, the fresco above the door to the Aula Maxima would be unremarkable except that beneath the Latin 'inscription', still contained within the fresco, there is a quatrain of verse in Irish, which itself contains a textual echo of Psalm 110.

Figure 9.10 Fresco over the door to the Aula Maxima, College of St Isidore, Rome. Photograph courtesy of Dr Geraldine Parsons.

Na tréig choídche ceachtar dhíbh,	Never forsake either of them:
searc is omhan a náird rí.	Love and fear of the High-King;
Tús gach fíoreagna a sé sin,	That is the beginning of all true wisdom:
sír eagla Dé air na daoínibh.	People's constant fear of God.

The Irish verse is taken from a didactic poem, *Mór a-tá ar theagasg flatha* ('Much is dependent on the instruction of a prince'), a *speculum principis* by the Irish poet and historian Tadhg mac Dáire Mheic Bhruaideadha (1570–1652).[5] If, as Carroll (2017: 120) eloquently and persuasively argues, the 'baroque retrospective evocation of the classical' found in frescos of the Aula Maxima was deployed to give the Irish Franciscans in exile 'an aesthetic genealogy' that firmly rooted them in Rome, then what of the purpose of the Irish verse over the door to the Aula Maxima? As others have noted, this fresco is a deliberate attempt to echo a near-identical inscription installed in the newly rebuilt University of Rome in the late sixteenth century (Mac Craith 2016: 71–2; 2019: 146; Nic Cárthaigh 2013: 173).[6] I would argue that the use of the Gaelic script in the faux-epigraphy of St Isidore's in Rome is to be understood as an attempt at the 'classicization' of Irish itself, bestowing on it a dignity comparable with the Roman capitals of Latin learning. The juxtaposition of the Latin text of the psalm in Roman capitals, alongside a poetic reworking of the same sentiment in Irish syllabic verse in Gaelic script, imitating

an inscription, seeks to elevate the position of Irish to the classical. While Carroll correctly notes the absence of Irish from the Aula Maxima, over the entrance we have an attempt to render the Roman Irish and render the Irish Roman. The Irish text is therefore a subtle visual statement, and a didactic one for those in the know, about the nature of Irish-language culture, greeting all those who enter.[7]

We therefore have here an instance of the migration of Gaelic script across media, from a manuscript to a fresco masquerading as inscription. But we also have a further instance of the migration of people and their books. Two of the earliest manuscript witnesses to *Mór a-tá ar theagasg flatha* were compiled during the early seventeenth century in the Spanish Netherlands, an area which was home to a significant contingent of literary-minded Irish military and aristocratic immigrants (Mac Craith 2019: 146; Nic Cárthaigh 2013). Moreover, Antóin Mac Bruaideadha, a great-nephew of Tadhg mac Dáire and a member of the Irish Franciscan community in Prague, had much of his great-uncle's poetry with him in manuscript form later in the seventeenth century (Fedeli et al. 2022: 58–9). It is, in fact, most likely that the text of the poem came to St Isidore's from Prague in the 1670s, as part of an exchange of literary material in both Latin and Irish (Mac Craith 2022: xii).

The laurel wreath: from Renaissance to Romanticism

The Irish manuscript tradition outlasted the Renaissance and so too did the engagement of Irish scribes with manifestations of visual classical reception. Nonetheless, while the nature of visual classicisms deployed by Irish scribes varies by period, a clear example, found across the seventeenth, eighteenth and also nineteenth centuries, is the motif of the laurel wreath, a classical symbol of victory and triumph. Usefully versatile and visually attractive as a framing device for portraits, titles and texts, often employed on title pages or frontispieces, the laurel wreath could be put to good use by scribes. We now turn our attention to three examples of this piece of classical iconography in the manuscripts of three different Irish scribes, demonstrating its evolution in manuscript decoration over time.

It has already been noted that the Ó Loinsigh prayer book (London, British Library Egerton MS 196), discussed above, makes use of Renaissance-mediated classical imagery in its title page and Roman-style script in its deployment of Latin. Another such example is a header over a section titled '*Do liottainuibh Iosa*' ('Litanies of Jesus'), where we find a portrait of a risen Christ framed by a laurel wreath, set in a square illustration framed by two sets of symmetrical classical arcades (see Figure 9.11). The manuscript image of Christ in profile is akin to a woodcut used by the Irish Franciscans in their 1645 Louvain printing of *Parrthas an Anma* (pp. 43, 283) and other printed books. But the crown of thorns, the laurel wreath and the classical arcade in the manuscript do not appear in the woodcut; while probably still inspired by printed models, the arrangement is that of the scribe, Uilliam Ó Loinsigh.

To the extent that the scribal 'school' established by the Ó Neachtain circle continued throughout the second half of the eighteenth century in Dublin, it continued primarily

Figure 9.11 London, British Library, Egerton MS 196, folio 46v. © The British Library Board.

through scribes who had migrated to Dublin. One thinks especially of scribes such as Aodh Ó Dálaigh (originally from northeast Connacht) and Muiris Ó Gormáin (originally from southeast Ulster), who were active as both teachers and scribes for hire. That tradition ended with Éinrí Mac an tSaoir (*alias* Henry Wright/Carpenter), a student of Ó Gormáin and the last in a line of Dublin-based scribes who could trace their scribal lineage back to the Ó Neachtain circle which had included Ó Loinsigh (Ó Muircheartaigh 2021: 234–5; Mac Cathmhaoil 2020: 328). Our account of Mac an tSaoir suggests that he emigrated from Ireland in the 1790s (Warburton et al. 1818: 934; Flower 1926/1992: 377), but if he did, unlike so many other scribes who left for new shores, he did not take all of his manuscripts with him. Many have come into the possession of the Royal Irish Academy (Mac Cathmhaoil 2020).

Figure 9.12 Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS F v 2, frontispiece. Image courtesy of the Royal Irish Academy.

An instance of visual classicism, again mediated through Italian Renaissance and Baroque printed book culture, is found in the frontispiece of Mac an tSaoir's 1788 manuscript, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS F v 2, depicting Aodh Mór Ó Néill (Hugh O'Neill), the Earl of Tyrone (see Figure 9.12), who, in 1607, led many other Irish nobles in the so-called 'Flight of the Earls' to seek military assistance and refuge in Catholic Europe. Ó Néill died in Rome in 1616.[8] The portrait of Ó Néill is encircled by a victor's laurel wreath. The image in Mac an tSaoir's manuscript, complete with laurel wreath, has been borrowed (probably indirectly) from a printed book: *La Spada d'Orione stellata nel Cielo di Marte* ('The Starry Sword of Orion in the Sky of Mars'), a title which itself emphasizes the book's attempt to classicize its subjects. Published in 1680, the Italian book is an account of forty-one great historical military leaders, accompanied by

Figure 9.13 *La Spada d'Orione stellata nel Cielo di Marte* (1680), p. 384. Image courtesy of Special Collections & Archives, Queen's University Belfast.

portraits. Aodh Mór Ó Néill is the only Irishman included. Above the portrait of Ó Néill in this Italian-printed book, the seventeenth-century royal arms of the Stuarts appear (see Figure 9.13), while the account of Ó Néill's biography is peppered with references to Graeco-Roman heroes and concludes with an image of Hercules wearing the skin of the Nemean lion and holding a club in his left hand (p. 394). Ó Néill is described as a 'Generale Ibernese' ('a Hibernian General'), drawing on the Latin name for Ireland, rather than the more usual 'Irlandese' ('Irish'). One might also view this as a further classicization of the Irish leader by the Italian compiler (see also Darwin, Chapter 8, this volume, for the application of classical exempla to exiled Gaelic nobles in this period). In another instance of the migration of images across a range of media, one observes that the likeness of Ó Néill in *La Spada* (and, by extension, in Mac an t-Saoir's manuscript) is strikingly similar to the representation of him found in a Vatican Library fresco depicting the canonization of Santa Francesca Romana by Pope Paul V in May 1608, an event which took place a matter of weeks after the exiled earl had arrived in Rome (Mac Craith 2010: 260; 2013: 108–9).

The laurel wreaths used in Ó Loinsigh's and Mac an tSaoir's manuscripts are late reflexes of Irish scribal engagement with Renaissance and Baroque book culture, but from the late eighteenth century onward, Irish scribes engaged with a different type of classicism, one mediated through the new broad European intellectual movement known as Romanticism. As part of the intellectual and literary endeavour associated especially with the earliest manifestations of Romanticism, equivalences were drawn between the antiquity of Northern Europe and the classical antiquity of the Mediterranean. Moreover, Northern European literature and history was increasingly rendered in 'classical' terms. So, Siegfried's lays became known as a 'Germanic Iliad' and, closer to home for Irish manuscript culture, James Macpherson's Ossian was the 'Homer of the North' (Leerssen 2016: 75). This movement sought to uncover (or fabricate) the antiquity of Northern Europe (especially of Ireland, Britain and Scandinavia), and to provide it with an aesthetic that could be set on an equal footing with that of ancient Greece and Rome.

A relatively early Irish manifestation of this Romantic tendency is that of Charlotte Brooke, who, in the preface to *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789), likened herself to 'the ladies of ancient Rome'. Despite this Roman allusion, Brooke did not adorn her title page with the typical eighteenth-century literary epigraph from one of the Roman poets Virgil, Horace or Ovid (on which see Erskine-Hill 2011; Buurma 2019). Instead, Brooke's title page employs a literary epigraph taken from what she understood as native Irish antiquity, *Cath Gabhra* ('The Battle of Gabhair'), a lay of the *fiannaíocht* or Fionn Cycle of literature (narratives featuring the hero Fionn, his son Oisín and the associated *fianna*, 'band of warriors'). Brooke's epigraph reads, 'A Oisín, as binn linn do sgéala' ('O Oisín, we are delighted by your tidings'), referencing the poetry of Oisín (*alias* Ossian) (Ní Mhunghaile 2009: II, 70–1). Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), a work which clearly inspired Brooke's approach to her own anthology, provides an excellent point of contrast: Percy took his epigraph, 'durat opus vatum' ('the work of bards endures'), from Ovid's *Amores* 3.9, an elegy for Ovid's fellow Roman poet Tibullus. Brooke's choice of an Irish epigraph in lieu of a Latin one is in line with other paratextual arrangements in the book, comparing the work of Irish poets favourably with that of Roman poets (Ní Mhunghaile 2009: II, 88). Visually, this epigraph is also a distinctive statement; it is the only occurrence of a Gaelic typeface on Brooke's title page. In a work aimed at an English-reading audience, the Irish epigraph, placed where one might expect the work of a classical author, combined with its use of a Gaelic type, underlines, in visual terms, the Romantic classicization of the Irish literary tradition envisaged by Brooke, as well as her desire to remediate the authority of the manuscript tradition in print (Ó Muircheartaigh 2021: 249).

Returning to the motif of the laurel wreath as a framing device, we observe a notable nineteenth-century example in the context of European Romanticism: Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 24 A 9, copied in 1823 by the Limerick scribe Thomas Geoghegan (O'Rahilly, Mulchrone et al. 1926–70: 1786). The title page of the manuscript describes its contents as 'The Poems of Osin [sic] and Saint Patrick or Memoirs of Irish Antiquity' (see Figure 9.14). The indicators of Irish antiquity include the texts themselves; 'the

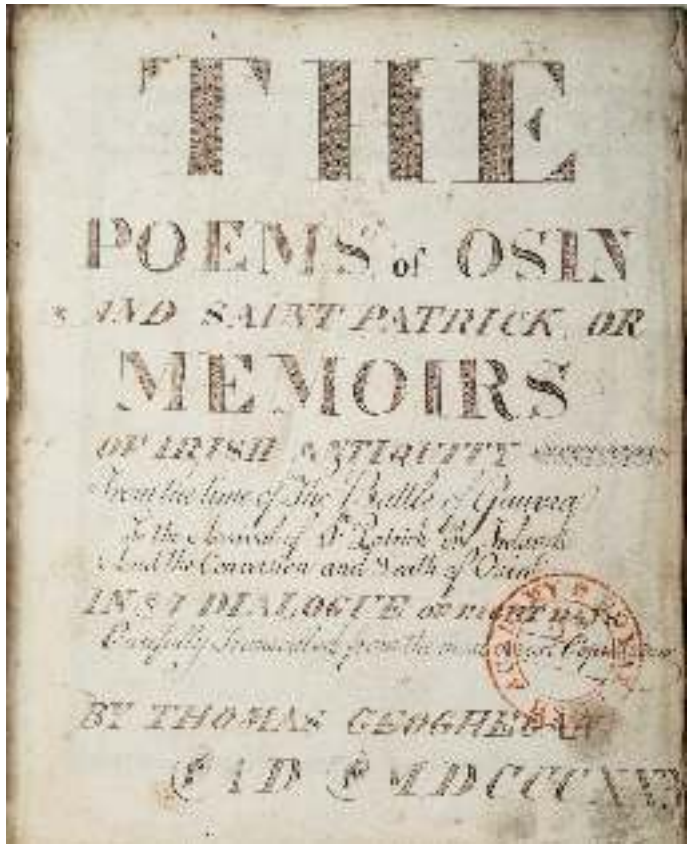

Figure 9.14 Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 24 A 9, title page. Image courtesy of the Royal Irish Academy.

poems of Osin and Saint Patrick' is (as in the case of the epigraph to Brooke's *Reliques*) no doubt a self-conscious invocation of the popularity and controversy surrounding James Macpherson's Ossian. But they also extend to other visual markers of Irish 'antiquity' found throughout the manuscript. Most remarkable among them is the scribe's consistent use of *ogham* script, a version of the epigraphic script used in the earliest Irish inscriptions. Repurposed by successive generations of Irish scribes and scholars to varying and sometimes entertaining ends (Poppe 2018; Hayden 2023; Ní Úrdail 2000: 87–8), the script – viewed as a marker of Irish antiquity – was commonly used by scribes of the eighteenth and nineteenth century in their colophons (see examples in Buttimer 2022: 120, 220, 246, 248). These 'native' indicators of Gaelic antiquity (the invocation of Oisín and the use of *ogham* script) appear side by side with a visual symbol of Graeco-Roman antiquity in the manuscript: the decorated title of each item is written in a Gaelic script encircled by a version of the laurel wreath, itself flanked by the *ogham* script. This layout is repeated throughout the manuscript (see
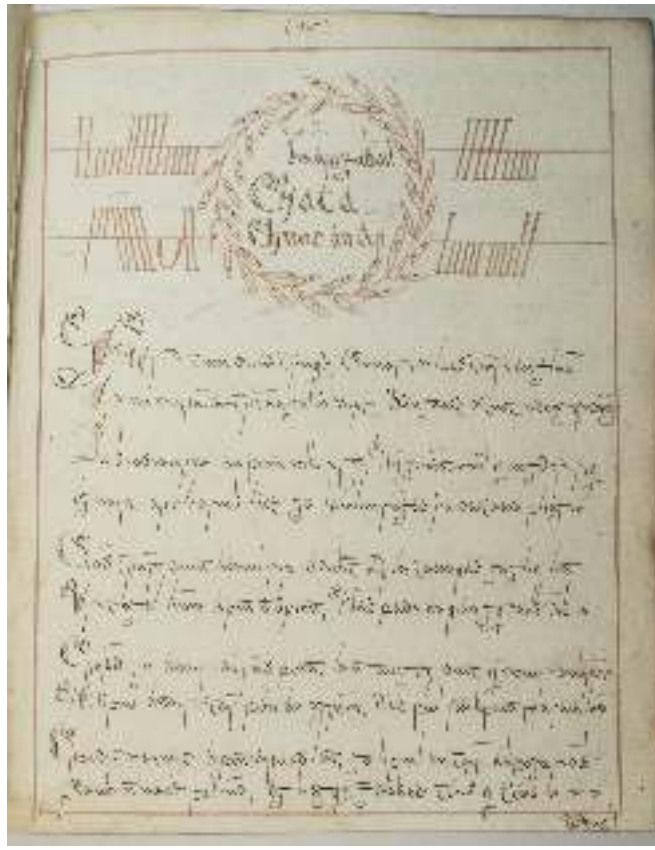
Figure 9.15 Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 24 A 9, p. 25. Image courtesy of the Royal Irish Academy.

Figure 9.15). These three examples of Irish scribes' use of the laurel wreath, in association with the risen Christ, the exiled Aodh Mór Ó Néill and the literary character of Oisín, exemplify the continuing influence of print culture on Irish manuscripts, from the Renaissance to the Romantic movement.

Classicizing the Gaelic hero: Seán Ó Coileáin and Donncha Ó Floinn

The tendency towards the visual Romantic classicization of the Irish literary tradition is further exemplified by Seán Ó Coileáin (*c.* 1754–1817), who penned Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 24 M 44 around 1780 in west Cork (O'Rahilly, Mulchrone et al. 1926–70: 2052–3). The manuscript contains a version of two closely related narratives: *Oileamhain Con Cualainn* ('The training of Cú Chulainn') and *Oidheadh Chonlaoich* ('The violent

death of Conlaoch'). In the former, Cú Chulainn, the quintessential hero of Gaelic tradition, receives martial training from the Amazonian-like warrior Scáthach at her Scythian palace – often conflated with Dún Scáthaich in the Isle of Skye, Scotland (Ó hUiginn 2013: 14). In the latter, Conlaoch, the son of Cú Chulainn, conceived during this Scythian/Scottish sojourn, comes to Ireland but is killed unwittingly by his father who does not recognize him. Notably, Ó Coileáin's manuscript contains two hand-drawn coloured 'plates', the second of which (see Figure 9.16) is titled '*Modh cómhraicc Con gCulainn mhic Subhaltaig, 7 Chuar mac Sgāthaig a bhfiaghnaise Pháláis na Scitia*' ('How Cú Chulainn son of Sualtamh fought Cuar son of Scáthach in front of the Palace of Scythia'). In this 'plate' we see Cú Chulainn on the right, engaged in combat with Cuar, the son of Scáthach, on the left. The most striking visual element is the degree to which these leading men of medieval Irish literature are dressed as classical heroes. Both Cú Chulainn and Cuar are depicted wearing Roman *pteruges* from their waists covering their thighs. Cuar's elaborate plumed helmet, in particular, is reminiscent of those of classical antiquity. This gives us some insight into how at least one eighteenth-century Irish scribe, inspired by models he had seen in printed books (and/or possibly even sculpture), viewed or imagined the characters of medieval Irish literature in his mind's eye.

There is, of course, in a contemporary context, an incongruence between the classicism of the characters and the not-so-classical representation of Scáthach's palace. Even more incongruous is the method by which Conlaoch comes to Ireland. The style of ship in Ó Coileáin's illustration belongs not to antiquity but to the late eighteenth century; it carries the King's Colours and the British Red Ensign, the flag used for British passenger ships throughout the eighteenth century, and familiar to anyone sailing to or from Ireland at that time (not pictured here but reproduced in Ó Buachalla 2009: facing 139). The image thus combined classical-influenced artistic imagination with lived experience. Aside from the plates, Ó Coileáin's manuscript displays other features which further highlight scribal engagement with the culture of the printed book: the manuscript has catchwords, page numbers, running titles and notes attached to the plates with instructions as to their position.[9]

In laying out this manuscript, Ó Coileáin was no doubt dealing with what he would have understood as Irish antiquity. Like the Limerick scribe Geoghegan, mentioned above, Ó Coileáin merges the visual iconography of Graeco-Roman antiquity with visual markers of a native Gaelic antiquity. He does this by dressing his Gaelic heroes in Graeco-Roman garb and, like Geoghegan, also through his use of the *ogham* script associated with a 'classicized' Gaelic antiquity. This use of *ogham* script is not haphazard or random; it occurs in the text in situations where it adds visually to the narrative effect. One such episode related in the text is the construction of a funerary mound over which a verse epitaph was inscribed by a druid in *ogham*. In a seamless switch of script, the text of the inscription is given in *ogham* followed by the druid's verse in regular Irish script and orthography.[10] The brief switch to *ogham* no doubt appealed to contemporary interest in this 'ancient' script among Anglophone antiquarians, who had themselves helped to shape the production of Irish manuscripts as active buyers in a manuscript

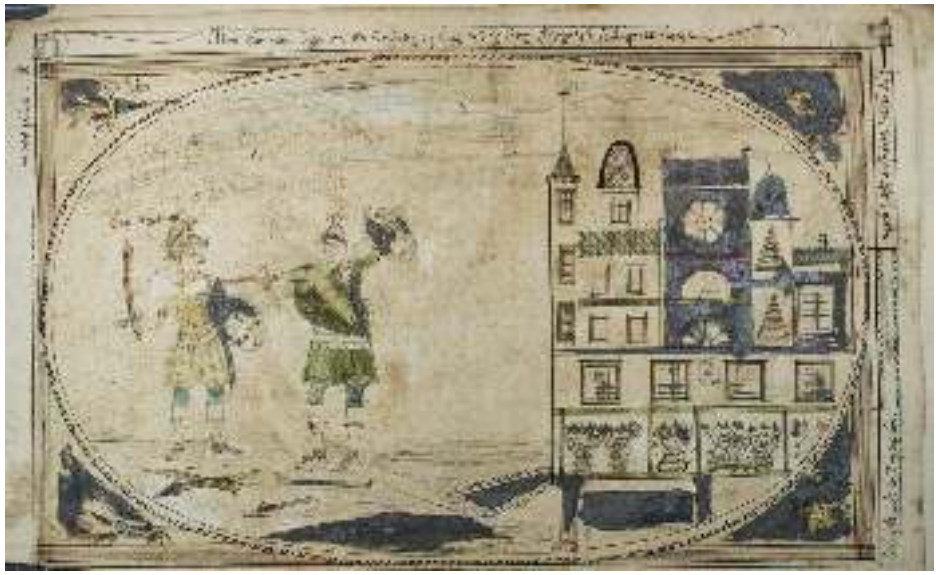

Figure 9.16 Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 24 M 44, plate 2. Image courtesy of the Royal Irish Academy.

'market' (Ní Úrdail 2000: 87–8; Rockley 2018: 150–5). Even without deciphering the *ogham*, its use served to classicize Gaelic antiquity as presented by Ó Coileáin, by cultivating a sense of obscurity and mystery in need of interpretation. Here, as elsewhere in Ó Coileáin's manuscripts (cf. Ní Úrdail 2000: 184, n. 6), the function of *ogham* is primarily iconographic.

Another notable visual representation of a character from the Irish literary tradition is found in the frontispiece to University College Cork MS Torna 1 (see Figure 9.17), a manuscript penned in 1821 by Donncha Óg Ó Floinn, the son of a better-known scribe also named Donncha Ó Floinn (Ó Conchúir 1982: 77). The relevant portion of the manuscript contains an early modern Arthurian-style romance known as *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* ('The Adventure of the Crop-eared Dog'), in which a knight is charged with visiting the 'Fountain of Virtues' to bring back a drink of water to the king. On this quest, he meets the crop-eared dog, who is, in reality, an enchanted prince, and from that point the narrative proper begins. The frontispiece has been added by the scribe's father, the elder Donncha, signed D.O.F. (Donncha Ó Floinn)[11] and labelled 'Teagbhāil Shir B.B. ris an Madra Maol ag Tobar na mBuadh' ('The encounter of Sir B.B. [Balbhuaidh] with the Crop-eared Dog at the Fountain of Virtues'). Sir Balbhuaidh, however, is not represented as a medieval chivalric knight but rather as a somewhat generic classical hero complete with plumed helmet, red Roman *pteruges* and cuirass.[12]

These images are particularly unusual in the context of Irish manuscript production, and so the parallels between the two scribes take on a new importance. Although neither was ordained a priest, Ó Coileán spent four months in a seminary training for the

Figure 9.17 University College Cork, MS T.i, p. xii. Special Collections & Archives, UCC Library, University College Cork.

priesthood in Portugal in the early 1770s (Ó Conchúir 1982: 43), while Donncha Ó Floinn also appears to have spent time in a continental seminary, although in his case it was likely in France (Ó Conchúir 1982: 72; for partial seminary training in Europe, resulting in a classical education, compare Donncha Rua Mac Conmara, discussed by Ó Liatháin, Chapter 11, this volume). No doubt, this experience broadened their bibliographic horizons and exposed them more readily to the multilingual book culture of Europe. Furthermore, we know that these two Cork scribes, Ó Floinn and Ó Coileáin, knew each other well and exchanged manuscripts (Uí Chatháin 2006: 28, n. 5; Ó Macháin 2018b: 178).

It must be acknowledged, however, that the physical migration of people is not required to explain the migration of images. Close engagement with printed Anglophone book culture was the norm for Irish scribes of this period, and more often than not, Irish scribes worked as schoolmasters, requiring at least some knowledge of Latin and English (Ní Shéaghdha 1990). As Laurie O'Higgins has pointed out (2017: 49), about 5,000 editions of classical works appeared in Dublin between 1700 and 1791 alone. Many of these publications carried frontispieces, title pages or other illustrations mediating visual representations of Graeco-Roman antiquity to contemporary viewers. Irish-language scribes would have had ready access to many of these works. Even printed works with no

direct classical associations per se often featured illustrations infused with visual classicisms. An example is provided by a nineteenth-century Irish-language manuscript, now preserved as Melbourne, Victoria State Library MS 10357. One of a set of two closely related manuscripts, it was presented to the library in 1888 by Matthew O'Shanassy, an emigrant from Tipperary to Australia (Byrnes 1996: 432). The last leaf of the manuscript consists of a print labelled 'Mr Young as Rolla. London / Published by J. C. Marks 17 Artillery St Bishopsgate', on which some later notes have been written (see Figure 9.18).[13]

The 'Rolla' of the print is a prince of the Incan Empire, and a character in *Pizarro*, a late eighteenth-century piece of romantic melodrama adapted to great acclaim for the English stage by the Irishman Richard Brinsley Sheridan (Carlson 1996). The play is not set in classical antiquity, but in sixteenth-century Peru during the conquest of the Incan Empire by the Spanish. Nonetheless, the image of Rolla – as depicted in this and other prints – is

Figure 9.18 Melbourne, State Library of Victoria, MS 10357, p. [136].

clearly indebted to Roman imperial models. This is perhaps most obvious through his Roman-style tunic, classicizing facial features and hair. Furthermore, one might see the Incan sun symbol worn on his chest as reminiscent of the gorgoneion amulets worn on the body armour of Roman emperors. Versions of this print were popular in the very late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century. The image is accompanied – among other jottings – by the name of Eoghan Ó Comhraidhe (1794–1862), Eugene O'Curry, a traditional scribe born in Co. Clare. Long before he was Professor of Irish History and Archaeology in the newly established Catholic University, O'Curry worked as a migrant labourer in Limerick. Thereafter, during the 1820s, he spent time working as a 'keeper' (a porter of sorts) in Limerick Asylum (Ó Madagáin 2008). It is in that guise that one wit has imagined him, and labelled the image 'Eugene Curry, as Rolla, taming the madmen in Limerick Lunatic Asylum'. As well as demonstrating the proximity of manuscript to print, the image and its label make another point: it is not just the heroes of Irish antiquity who could be rendered in romanticized classical garb; Irish scribes – no doubt with tongue firmly in cheek – could be subjected to the same treatment by their colleagues. Beneath Ó Comhraidhe's name is the signature of Tomás Ó Cathláin in Gaelic script, dated 1936. Ó Cathláin left Ireland for Australia in 1927 never to return, but writing (illicitly) in this manuscript in Australia in 1936, he states that he is from '*Gleann an Ridire i gCo. Luimnighe*' ('Glin, Co. Limerick'), an area long associated with scribal activity and literary patronage (Ní Úrdail 2000: 32, 35–6; de Brún 2009). Ó Cathláin's short note, not unlike a scribal colophon, is a clear statement of the Irish emigrant in Australia's enduring self-identification with his homeland, and with a long tradition of localized Irish-language scribal and scholarly activity in which he took an active interest (de Brún 2018: 19–20). Better known to Irish-Australian history as Thomas F. Culhane (1891–1969), he was active in the cultivation of the Irish language and literature among his fellow emigrants in Australia (Noone 2012: 58, 141).

Visual classicism, migrations and Irish manuscript culture: conclusions

The selected examples of visual classicism found in Irish manuscripts and discussed in this chapter, incorporating the classicizing imagery of architecture, literary characters, historical figures, inscriptions, script choice, laurel wreaths and military dress, are just a small indicator of a largely unstudied feature of Ireland's later, vernacular manuscript tradition that deserves much further attention. Each of the scribes discussed in this chapter – and others besides – warrant further study, not only for their use of classical iconography but for their attention to the visuality of their manuscripts more generally. So too does the distinction between artistic creativity and imitation on the part of Irish scribes merit further attention than has been possible here. Certainly, in some examples we have examined, classical iconography is incidental to scribal desires to imitate the aesthetic of print in manuscript form. Nonetheless, the types of visual classicism discussed in this chapter are broadly in line with the diagnosis of O'Higgins (2017: 199–

200) in her survey of what she calls the 'classical strain' in eighteenth-century Irish thought more generally: '[that] the secure and prestigious classical tradition provided a kind of template of stability [for Irish cultural expression]'. For Irish scribes, the visual juxtaposition of elements of Irish-language culture with the iconography of the Graeco-Roman world could lend classical credence to elements of Gaelic culture which they wished to showcase.

The visual classicism appearing in Irish manuscripts from the late seventeenth century through to middle of the nineteenth century was dynamic and evolving. One gradually sees the prevailing visual culture of the Renaissance, so evident in the seventeenth-century Roman surroundings of the Irish Franciscans in exile, or in Uilliam Ó Loinsigh's manuscript design, give way to the Romanticism more evident in Geoghegan's title pages and the portrayals of heroes of Irish literature by Ó Coileáin and Ó Floinn. Much recent scholarship has focused on the interaction between custodians of Irish manuscript literary culture and the world of print. It has been demonstrated here that the dual prisms of visuality and classical reception provide an enlightening perspective on the interaction between those two (and other) media. In a European context, the Irish situation provides a rare insight into how a vernacular manuscript book culture negotiates proximity to, and simultaneous distance from, the printing press.

For all that the productivity of Irish manuscript culture sets it apart from other European contexts, where the dominance of print was quickly established, the visual elements of Irish manuscript culture examined here highlight a close and dynamic interaction between Irish scribes and the visual culture of the European printed book. That a productive Gaelic book culture was in constant dialogue with the literature, art and culture of the world beyond was not an innovation, as such, but it seems to have reached a new level of intensity in the period from the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth.[14] This intensity rested, primarily, on the interaction of Irish scribes with the ever-increasing proliferation of print in English and other languages (Barnard 2017; Ó Ciosáin 1997). A second crucial factor, however, was the constant migration, back and forth, of Irish people and their books to Europe and the wider world (Ó Macháin 2015). While this chapter has focused on the migration of elements of classical iconography across a range of media, it has been demonstrated, in tandem, that from the seventeenth century onwards, the production, consumption and preservation of Irish manuscripts was an international affair.[15]

Notes

1. On the productivity of the Irish manuscript book well into the nineteenth century, see Ó Macháin 2009; 2019: 21. The Irish case invites comparison with Icelandic material, on which see Driscoll 2013.
2. For discussion of such dichotomies, especially in Anglophone scholarship, see Drimmer 2020.
3. On the association between the Latin language and Roman type in the English print culture of the period, see Kaislaniemi 2017: 171.

4. An illustration of how the emergence of Roman script intersected with earlier models, from both manuscripts and ancient Roman inscriptions, is provided by Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), the Italian humanist scholar often credited with popularizing Roman script, who was also involved in the collection and study of ancient Roman inscriptions (Ullman 1960: 54–7).
5. The original Irish text is quoted here exactly as found in the fresco (except that it is represented here over four lines rather than the two of the fresco); the translation quoted is that of Nic Cárthaigh 2013: 168, who has edited the entire poem and discusses it in detail.
6. It is from this prominent marble inscription over the entrance to the Roman university that the university's nickname, 'La Sapienza', derives.
7. For discussion of two further instances of Irish inscriptions elsewhere in St Isidore's College, both ultimately derived from manuscript witnesses to medieval Irish texts, see Mac Craith 2015.
8. Other frontispieces from Mac an tSaoir's manuscripts are reproduced in Ó Buachalla 2009.
9. These features might suggest that Ó Coileáin had hopes of seeing his text (and accompanying images) in print, though another interpretation might see these features as indicative of the degree to which Irish scribes of the eighteenth century saw both print and manuscript as belonging to a single broad culture of the book; cf. Ó Buachalla 2009: 139.
10. There is a significant discrepancy between the text in *ogham* script and that in the Gaelic script. This is not the only manifestation of Ó Coileáin's interest in *ogham*, on which see Ní Úrdail 2000: 183–8 and Uí Chatháin 2006: 26–7.
11. The elder Donncha Ó Floinn was central to the 'rediscovery' of the Book of Lismore by nineteenth-century Cork scribes, a rediscovery which had wide-ranging effects on manuscript decoration among a network of Cork scribes, especially the Ó Longáin family (Ó Macháin 2018b).
12. On the identification of Sir Balbhuaidh with Gawain, see Brady 2019: 71, n. 12.
13. For Pádraig Ó Macháin's description of the manuscript, see www.isos.dias.ie/AUS3/AUS_MS_10357.html.
14. One can compare the situation here with that outlined by Ó Macháin 2021 in his examination of the influence of the Renaissance on earlier vellum manuscripts.
15. I am very grateful to Mícheál Mac Craith, Pádraig Ó Macháin, Ciarán Rua O'Neill, Geraldine Parsons and Isabelle Torrance for their helpful comments and useful discussion in the writing of this chapter. I alone am responsible for any errors or heresies that remain.

CHAPTER 10
A TRIP TO THE MOON BY MR. MURTAGH MCDERMOT (1727): LUCIAN, SWIFT, MIGRATION SATIRE AND IRISH POLITICS

Isabelle Torrance

In the 'Introduction' to their edited volume on *Migration*, Doris Bachmann-Medick and Jens Kugele open with a question: 'How do people think about migration?' (2018: 1). The answers to this question are, naturally, varied depending on cultural context, experience and political circumstance. The collection focuses on contemporary twenty-first-century concerns, but this new approach to studying how migration is *imagined* is entirely germane to the wildly vivid migration and travel stories produced in eighteenth-century Ireland, the most famous and influential being Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The subject of the present chapter will be a little-studied but thought-provoking migration satire which frames itself as a direct response to *Gulliver's Travels* but is more deeply indebted to Lucian's *True History* in its structure and general content.

A Trip to the Moon by Mr. Murtagh McDermot: Containing Some Observations and Reflections, made by him during his Stay in that Planet, upon the Manners of the Inhabitants was first printed in Dublin in 1727 by the publisher Christopher Dickson, and reprinted in London in 1728 by J. Roberts (Loeber and Loeber 2006: 810).[1] It describes the purportedly biographical experience of the author over a two-year period between 1718 and 1720. As a result of constrained circumstances, McDermot sets off from Dublin on a ship bound for Tenerife, where he climbs a mountain peak and is thence swept upwards by a violent whirlwind and ends up on the Moon. There he experiences lunar culture in its various aspects, many of which are satirical reflections on, or of, life in Ireland. The lunar people are animal–human hybrids and speak a language almost bereft of vowels, which McDermot manages to learn by ingesting a boiled dictionary with the help of his lunar friend Tckbrff. A number of intriguing metaliterary elements appear in the narrative. An underwater workshop exists, for instance, where poetry is created by being physically hammered into shape with special anvils and tools, suggesting both the commodification or industrialization of literature and the (hidden) labour of literary production. The poetry is then sold to poets who pass it off as their own work, a notable premise in a text that is itself written under a pseudonym. There is also a machine into which sheets of printed poetry are fed and rearranged as nonsense.

It is in this workshop that McDermot encounters the Philosopher's Stone, which turns out to be an earthenware human-shaped object, pale and exhausted, with outstretched arms ending in paws looking to grasp whatever they can. Standing on a heap of gold, it is attended by the phantoms of avarice, fear and discontent. In the narrative itself,

Pythagoras is the most significant philosopher. He is originally from the Moon, we discover, where he was reincarnated into many different professions before being reborn on Earth, and Pythagoreanism is an important religion on the Moon. Ultimately, having first considered remaining permanently on the Moon as a soldier in service to the Moon King, McDermot decides to return to Ireland. He constructs an ingenious sort of rocket from a wooden frame and gunpowder and manages to get back to Dublin after being rescued from a colony of intelligent parrots in Australia. Once returned, he moves to the north of Ireland to join his friends who have moved there in his absence.

The satire stands in a long line of works that combine reflections on society and government with utopian ideals and extraterrestrial or imaginary travel narratives, ranging from Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) to Irish author Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), published just prior to McDermot's adventures. In addition to the works by Swift and 'McDermot' (pseudonym for an unidentified author), other Irish examples of such satire include Francis Gentleman's *A Trip to the Moon. Containing an account of the island of Noibla* (an anagram of Albion; 1764, 1765); the anonymous *A History of the Customs, Manners, and Religion of the Moon. To which are annexed several specimens of lunar poetry; and the characters of the most distinguished personages* (1782; printed in Dublin by John Hillary of Castle Street); and Lady Mount Cashell's *Selene* (1820s).[2] These works are helpfully discussed alongside each other in Deirdre Ní Chuanacháin's *Utopianism in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (2016: 108–53), which also places them within the broader context of the genre of Utopian writing. It is observed, for instance, that the starting point of McDermot's lunar journey from Tenerife recalls the character of Domingo Gonsales in Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone* (1638), who travels to the Moon from the same Canary Island (Ní Chuanacháin 2016: 112; a point also made by Borgmeier 1989: 125). Another lunar fiction in verse, *The Moonlanders* (1816) by Irish author Melesina Trench, has been well discussed by Stephen Behrendt (2019).

What is most notable about McDermot's text, I suggest, when viewed against the constellation in which it exists, is its repeated insistence on marking the author's identity as Irish alongside its overt allusion to the classical predecessor of Lucian's *True History*. A connection to Swift is also significant, while McDermot exploits Lucian's classical model in novel ways to reflect on migration, governance and religious politics through a specifically Irish lens. In the following discussion, I outline how the works of Lucian and Swift are evoked by McDermot, how Anglo-Irish politics are brought to the fore, and suggest, by way of conclusion, that the imagined experiences of migration satirized in *A Trip to the Moon* should be read against the backdrop of the contemporary Irish emigration.

Classical framing: Lucian and Swift

Lucian is a key figure for Utopian writing. He was a significant influence on Thomas More, whose Latin translations of Lucian were widely read by contemporaries, and Lucian's works are presented as popular with More's Utopians; there is no doubt that

More's *Utopia* was deeply influenced by Lucian's writings (Branham 1985). Lucian's *True History* is the crucial and most influential text. Written in Attic Greek in the second century CE, *True History* is often identified as one of our earliest examples of science fiction and is Lucian's most famous work. Properly titled *Ἀληθῆ Διηγήματα*, 'True Tales', the satire has become best known by its common Latin title, *Vera Historia*, and the English translation, *True History*. The tale purports to be a first-person account of the author's journey to the Moon and associated adventures, with parodies of travel stories from Homer's *Odyssey* (data collated by Bouquiaux-Simon 1968) and of war narratives from the Athenian historian Thucydides (see, e.g., Bartley 2003). Lucian's *True History* famously opens with the disclaimer that nothing within the work is true (by inference including the title), before proceeding to a detailed account of a reportedly first-person experience. As Karen ní Mheallaigh has discussed, the autobiographical mode of Lucian's writing creates a 'constant challenge' for the reader '*not* to be taken in', as he continuously creates 'the illusion of authenticity' in spite of his opening claim (ní Mheallaigh 2014: 207–8).

Lucian describes how, having set off on a naval voyage, he and his crew get caught in a whirlwind and find themselves on the Moon. On arrival they discover that the King of the Moon and the King of the Sun are at war over colonization of the Morning Star. Lucian and his crew are drawn into the war on the side of the Moon-men; they become POWs after the Moon is defeated by the Sun and are eventually released pursuant to a peace treaty. The narrative contains detailed ethnographic descriptions of how life on the Moon differs from life on Earth. The lunar adventures are packed with hybrid creatures such as horse-vultures, horse-ants, cloud-centaurs, and humanoid lamps, and are further framed by encounters with vine-women, pumpkin pirates, and ass-women, among others. On returning to Earth, Lucian and his crew pass by a bird colony, Cloudcuckooland – the community of birds presented in the comedy *Birds* by Aristophanes. They then get swallowed by a 200-mile-long whale which is home to a colony of fish-people. They wage war on the fish-people, annihilate them, and establish their own settlement. Later, they kill the whale by starting a bonfire and wedging its mouth open so that they can escape, ending up on the Islands of the Blessed. There they meet heroes and famous figures including Homer, Odysseus and Pythagoras among the most significant. Odysseus gives them a letter to deliver to Calypso; they do so, manage to avoid a chasm in the Ocean, and decide to explore a far-off continent. The story ends abruptly with the unfulfilled promise that these exploits will be recounted in forthcoming books.

McDermot uses framing devices which, I suggest, are designed to place his text in a line of descent from Lucian's *True History*. Both tales begin with the author on a naval journey being swept up by a whirlwind and deposited on the Moon and conclude with an empty promise of a sequel. McDermot's texts ends with the statement '*The End of the* FIRST PART', but no further parts are published. Boths authors engage with the issue of veracity, presenting a purportedly autobiographical account of impossible events. A pair of Latin epigraphs appear on McDermot's title page, seemingly emphasizing precisely this combination. The first gives a hint of the fantastical tale to come while the second insists on the true nature of the narrative. *Quae genus aut Flexum variant Heteroclita*

sunto is a quotation from the widely-used sixteenth-century Lily's Grammar. As a statement on grammar, the sentence ostensibly refers to irregular nouns, 'Those [nouns] which change their stem or inflection let them be [called] irregular.' Devoid of context, the word for nouns must be inferred and the quotation has the potential to be read differently. In non-grammatical contexts, '*genus*' commonly means 'species', while '*flexus*' is 'a winding course'. The rare word '*heteroclitus*', meaning 'irregular', is derived from Greek and means, more strictly, 'called something else'. There is apparently a playful ambiguity here. 'Quae' as a neuter plural relative pronoun, 'those which', from which 'nouns' is inferred in a grammatical context, could easily imply a different noun in the absence of an antecedent. The noun '*animalia*' (animals, creatures) might suggest itself, quite naturally alongside '*genus*', for a reading 'Those [creatures] which change their species or winding course, let them be called something else.' This evokes McDermot's Moon-beings who literally change species, becoming more beast than human the more they are corrupted, as they wander off the morality track (arguably reflecting an embedded notion of Pythagorean transmigration).

The second epigraph, *Ridentem dicere verum / quid vetat*, 'What is to prevent one telling the truth while laughing?', is a quotation from Horace *Satires* 1.24, co-opted by McDermot to press the point of veracity coupled with humour that he claims for his narrative. The final word of McDermot's tale itself, moreover, is 'Truth' (McDermot 1728: 90). If anyone still doubts the report by the end of the tale, McDermot provides, as evidence for confirming his own aerial transportation, a contemporary report apparently from *Dickson's Newsletter*. This describes a whirlwind lifting close to one hundred yards into the air four hay cocks weighing two hundred pounds each, and carrying them off half a mile. If this is possible, how can anyone doubt McDermot's own experience? The Dublin-based newsletter was printed throughout 1727 by the same Chistopher Dickson who had published *A Trip to the Moon*, also appearing under the names *The Dublin Gazette* and *Dickson's Dublin Newspaper*. Irish newspaper records put the first publication date at possibly 6 June that year, with the earliest preserved copy surviving from 8 June 1727 in the collection of Dublin City Libraries (O'Toole and Smyth 1998: 34). McDermot dates his quoted extract '*June 5.* 1727', which suggests that the news item is also, as far as we can tell, a fiction of his own creation.

In addition to these striking thematic and structural parallels to Lucian's *True History*, we might also note some more general correspondences in the content of McDermot's *A Trip to the Moon*. Both works feature hybrid creatures, an ethnographic description of lunar customs and governance, an underwater adventure and an encounter with a bird colony on the way back to Earth. Both authors also display significant interest in the materiality of written texts. Inscriptions, letters and books are important in Lucian (see ní Mheallaigh 2008: 419–22; 2014: 250–8), while McDermot satirizes the intellectual qualities of literary craft by making it an activity of physical labour. Pythagoras is an important figure for both (see further below), as is the idea of the Moon as a sort of mirror image or alternative reality of Earth, a concept itself derived from Pythagorean thought (Georgiadou and Larmour 1998: 82–3; ní Mheallaigh 2014: 216–18; 2020: 76–8, 88). Since McDermot's narrative focuses exclusively on the Moon, whereas Lucian's

adventures there are only part of his travelogue, it makes sense for Pythagoras and Pythagoreans to take on a more significant role in McDermot. His Moon-people are Pythagoreans in their religious customs, and the lunar society he describes is a rather direct mirror image of contemporary Ireland, a point made implicitly in McDermot's opening preface:

> *I am not ignorant to what Danger Treatises of this Nature are liable, on account of a Mistake that prevails among the more ignorant Sort, who deny the Transmigration of an Inhabitant of one Planet to another, as firmly as they deny the Transmigration of Souls from one Body to another. But tho' I do not take upon me to defend the latter, since I dare not pretend to argue better than* Pythagoras *has done, yet I hold the former, and bring the most convincing Argument for it, Experience. I went, I saw, I return'd; I ventur'd my Life many Times for the Information of my* Countrymen*, who, I hope, will shortly by their own Ingenuity, confirm what I have said. There is one Objection against this Piece, which I think ought to be remov'd. It may be said, that the Author never has been in the* Moon*, since he relates very little, but what is observable among us, for he talks of* Plays, Coffee-Houses, Balls, Ladies, Tea, Intriguing, Pythagoreans*, and other Things, which may be easily apply'd to our selves, and are in Use among us. To this I answer,*
>
> *First, That to condemn a Man without sufficient Evidence, is contrary to our* Irish *Statutes, neither can such Evidence be had, till some Body arrives from the* Moon*, who I am sure will bear Witness to all I have set down.*
>
> *Secondly, The Similitude of Manners is but a weak Objection. Does not every Body know that Nature in all her Works delights in Uniformity? Why then may not the Inhabitants of our secondary Planet be like us in their Behaviour? . . .*

McDermot positions himself firmly as a Pythagorean, playfully suggesting that lunar travel is equivalent to the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls. The Pythagorean frame lends a spurious gravitas to McDermot's enterprise, and may also reflect other classical precedents connecting lunar travel to metempsychosis such as Plutarch's *On the Face in the Moon* (944c–d), where souls shuttle back and forth between the Earth and the Moon in the form of *daimones*, or Lucian's *Icaromenippus, or the Sky-Man* (13–15), where the spirit of Empedocles is on the Moon. The prominence of Pythagoreanism itself must have tapped into popular contemporary appetites, driven by an eighteenth-century understanding of Pythagoreanism as a 'coherent system of ideas … used within the communicative structure of the early modern Republic of Letters', with Pythagoras himself playing 'the role of a travelling genius' (Neumann 2016: 462). Just a few years prior to the publication of *A Trip to the Moon*, for instance, Samuel Croxall's *The Secret History of Pythagoras* had appeared, in 1722, and was still being republished in 1751.

Pythagoras, then, is an important inheritance developed from Lucian, but McDermot's tale is also indebted to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Particularly Swiftian are the lunar names and language, which lack vowels almost entirely. The name of McDermot's lunar friend

and companion is Tckbrff, for instance, which resembles Houyhnhnm speech from *Gulliver's Travels*, as others have noted (Welcher and Bush 1970: ix; Borgmeier 1989: 124; Ní Chuanacháin 2016: 126). Welcher and Bush (1970: viii–ix) have listed the ways in which McDermot's *A Trip to the Moon* imitates *Gulliver's Travels* and Swift's style more generally. The most overt point of connection is McDermot's closing Dedication, 'To The Worthy, Daring, Adventurous, Thrice-renown'd, and Victorious Captain Lemuel Gulliver', at the end of the book. It concludes:

> Thee, *Gulliver*, I stile most worthy; and as I believe thee averse to Flattery, as free from Pride, I am persuaded that you will not be offended at a *Dedication* in the *Rear*, but approve of, and accept, if what goes before be worth your Notice: Accept it according to your wonted Candour, and believe me to be,
>
> *With all due Respect, Your most Devoted, Humble Servant,* Murtagh Mc. Dermot.

Printed in 1727, McDermot's *A Trip to the Moon* appeared not long after *Gulliver's Travels* was first published in October 1726, at a time when many believed Lemuel Gulliver to be a real person. The opening paragraph of McDermot's concluding Dedication, however, raises, once again, the issue of veracity:

> Let it not be said, *Gulliver's* alive, or the *Laputians* had e're now crush'd us, by coming down to mourn him; yet his Lustre dazzles; he cannot be conceal'd; His Fame rings loudly in the MOON: *To Clods of Earth I tell it*.

If Gulliver were not alive, or 'real' one might conjecture, the inhabitants of the flying island of Laputa would have overwhelmed Earth in mourning him. Proof of Gulliver's existence is anchored, paradoxically, to the most fantastical realm in his travels. Lunar society knows who he is, we are told, while terrestrial 'clods' need to be made aware. Although *Gulliver's Travels* is only directly mentioned in this final humorous dedication 'in the *Rear*', which may evoke the posterior-sniffing-as-greeting on the Moon, discussed below, it is important to acknowledge that Swift's novel itself also owes a significant debt of inspiration to Lucian's *True History* (see, e.g., Robinson 1979: 137–40; Passmann and Vienken 2003, vol. ii: 1114–20, with further references).

Anglo-Irish politics

If McDermot references the Laputians in the concluding 'Dedication' of his work, the reader is prompted to consider the potential significance of Swift's Laputa (cf. Borgmeier 1989: 125). As the seat of the King of Balnibarbi, who rules his lands below from this floating island, Laputa is a thinly-veiled satirical representation of English rule over the rebellious city of Lindalino (Lin-da-lin-o = double 'lin' = Dublin), an allegory for Ireland resisting oppressive British government policies. Lindalino's effective counteroffensive against Laputa's oppression in *Gulliver's Travels* 'celebrates colonial insurrection' (Hawes

2010: 172).[3] McDermot's lunar court is also a satirical mirror of English rule, with a focus on the general degeneracy of the court. A pre-emptive apology for the obvious analogy is made in the introductory preface:

> *As to what is said concerning Government, let none misapply it: I had sworn Allegiance to King* George *the First of glorious Memory, before my Departure, and was always firmly attach'd to the* Hanoverian *Succession, against the base Pretensions of a cowardly, spurious, Popish* Pretender; *besides, a monarchical Government can never be applied with the least probability to the Crown of* Great Britain.

McDermot's concern that his description of lunar government may be misconstrued as satire clearly insists on the allegory within it. The author raises the very possibility of analogy for the reader, before presenting himself ostentatiously as a loyal servant to the crown being satirized. Professing to be a devotee of King George I against the claims of James Stuart (Catholic brother of the deceased Queen Anne), McDermot's concluding comment in the sentence may well be designed to pique the reader's suspicions regarding the veracity of the whole statement. Allusion to a 'monarchical Government', such as the lunar system where the monarch is elected (McDermot 1728: 23), reflects the shift towards constitutional monarchy that occurred during the reign of George I, when actual political power resided, to a large extent, with the Whig statesman Robert Walpole, who is generally regarded as the first and longest-serving Prime Minister (in office 1721–42). McDermot's statement, then, that such a political development is unlikely, is contradicted by contemporary politics, prompting the conclusion that the entire claim of loyalty to the crown may be specious or at least questionable (a point to which we return below).

A Trip to the Moon was published not long after Ireland had dealt Walpole a significant political blow pursuant to the Wood's Halfpence affair in the 1720s, which had mobilized a sense of national patriotism in Irish Protestants and represents one of the severest disputes between the Irish and British political establishments during the eighteenth century. The controversy revolved around a royal patent for coining copper halfpence and farthings in Ireland that was granted to an English ironmonger named William Wood in 1722. Opposition to the planned coinage was fierce. It was argued, *inter alia*, that the patent should have been granted to an Irish ironmonger, that Ireland should have its own mint, that economic profits from the coinage should remain in Ireland and not be exported to England, and that the Irish economy would be debased by the introduction of low-value copper coinage. Following the 1720 Declaratory Act, which had reasserted the subordination of the Irish Parliament to Westminster, the mood in Ireland was already resentful and agitated. Swift was a key player during this period, through his anonymous *Drapier's Letters* published between 1724 and 1725, particularly the fourth letter addressed to the 'Whole People of Ireland' (published in October 1724). Written in the persona of a middle-class linen draper making observations on the impact of the debased coinage to the Irish economy, Swift's arguments caught both popular and

political imaginations. Walpole's Parliament was ultimately forced to bow to political pressure from Ireland and withdrew the patent in 1725 (see further McNally 1997).

It is within this contemporary climate that McDermot presents his alternative lunar court. The Moon King is elected, chosen for good services to his country and for the 'Perfectness of his human Form' not being corrupted into animal parts (McDermot 1728: 23). Kings rule for life, however, and can become corrupted during their reign due to being invested with so much power. The current Moon King has been tainted in this way. He is identified as 'an absolute Monarch' and 'an ambitious Tyrant' (McDermot 1728: 16). After answering the King's questions on 'the Government and Customs of [his] own Nation', McDermot fears that the King 'intended to make use of [his] Judgment and Parts to enslave his People the more, if possible, and perpetrate his Cruelty with greater Security' (McDermot 1728: 21).

The King has the head and right paw of a lion, with a hairy taloned left hand showing signs of imminent transformation into another paw (McDermot 1728: 23). The increasing animal hybridity marks his developing corruption and tyranny, and it is difficult not to read this figure as a satirical mirror for the King of England represented by the royal lion of his coat of arms. The Courtiers, too, are parodies of English stereotypes. Ostensibly 'Men of Power and Learning', they sniff each other's backsides like dogs on meeting. McDermot attempts to rationalize this bizarre greeting habit by examining 'Things in the *Moon* by *English* Rules'. He concludes that since the intention as well as the habit of a body can be deduced from the smell, shape and colour of its excrement, the Moon courtiers have 'wisely made use of this Method to inform themselves' and thus 'avoid needless Expressions, such as *How do you do*'; should anyone object that the greeting 'is very like that used by two *Irish* Curs' when each hopes the other is a bitch, we are reassured that 'the Persons mentioned were really Brutes' (McDermot 1728: 19–20). The Moon King's court, then, is populated by brutes who greet each other like aroused dogs might, but pose as high and educated members of society.

McDermot goes on to describe the Irish system of government in response to the Moon King's questions. The reader is not privy to what he actually says, but we are presented with the profound effect the information has on McDermot's lunar friend Tckbrff. He asserts that all Irish men must be honest because of the reasonable laws of the constitution 'where the Interests of the King and the People are so blended, that it is impossible for the one to subsist without the other; and where the People must out of Gratitude love him whose chief and constant Care it is to preserve them in their Rights and Privileges' (McDermot 1728: 21). McDermot, amused, replies that the Irish are in fact 'the most refractory and rebellious People in the *Solar System*', going on to explain, as well as he can, 'the Difference between *Whig* and *Tory*, *Protestant* and *Papist*', each man adhering to his position with unreasonable zeal (McDermot 1728: 21–2).

These disputes appear to be mirrored on the Moon where, as McDermot later describes, although lunar society is mostly Pythagorean, many other sects of philosophers exist with murderous intentions towards one another (McDermot 1728: 42). Although identified as philosophers, the religiously-charged understanding of Pythagoreanism, commonplace in the early modern period, lends weight to an analogy with religious

disputes (on early modern scholarship's obsession with Pythagoreanism's theological claims, see Robichaud 2022). In McDermot, Pythagoreans repeatedly try but fail to stop up a sacred fountain remarkable for its purity, but the 'more the *Pythagoreans* labour'd to suppress it, the more it over-flow'd, and grew daily more famous, to their Shame and Confusion' (McDermot 1728: 43). The water is so full of virtue as to cause drinkers to renounce their Pythagoreanism and return to their human shape, that is to a state of moral superiority; Pythagoreans have risked their lives in attempting to destroy it and the fountain's guards have sometimes died in their duty to defend it (McDermot 1728: 43). McDermot then observes that the same philosophical sects exist on Earth as on the Moon (McDermot 1728: 44).

McDermot's introduction of Pythagoreanism to his narrative is, according to Welcher and Bush (1970: ix), the most original concept in a work that, according to them, mostly revisits and reconfigures Swiftian tropes. The manner of its presentation is also particularly suited to satirizing Anglo-Irish religious politics, where a dominant denomination tries and fails to suppress other denominations, with possible violent outcomes. The idea, moreover, that people might be persuaded to renounce their beliefs reflects a contemporary reality among disenfranchised Irish Catholics and Presbyterians. As Nigel Yates summarizes (2006: 18–19), in early eighteenth-century Ireland the 'desire to retain their estates and not to be excluded from political life encouraged a substantial number of Roman Catholic landowners, and others aspiring to social advancement, to conform to the Church of Ireland'.

What McDermot's own position is on the issue of religious politics is impossible to determine. His account of the execution of a king suggests Jacobite sympathies. He describes, to Tckbrff's indignation and horror, a king 'that thro' Faction and private Interest was put to Death, yet might have sav'd his Life and his Crown if he wou'd consent with wicked Ministers to oppress his People' (McDermot 1728: 22). This obviously evokes the execution of the Stuart King Charles I in 1649. Here, Charles I is presented as a martyr unwilling to bow to political pressure that would harm his subjects. Earlier in the preface, however, McDermot had professed sworn allegiance to the Hanoverian King George I, as noted above. Now in conversation with Tckbrff, George I comes in for significant praise as a contrast to the corrupt Moon King:

> I cou'd not but praise our own King [i.e. George I], who before his Accession to the Crown had signaliz'd himself for his Valour, and often hazarded his Life for the Defence of his Country, and after his Coronation improv'd the good Qualities he was before possess'd of, to the great Joy of his People.
>
> *McDermot (1728: 23–4)*

McDermot alludes to George I's illustrious military record. His campaigns had included the Franco–Dutch War, the Great Turkish War and the War of the Spanish Succession. From 1707 to 1709, he had held the office of Imperial Field Marshal before resigning from active service. The assessment of George I's popularity may also reflect general contemporary sentiment. He had advocated for leniency after the Jacobite rebellion of

'The Fifteen' in 1715, for instance, and generated significant stability during his reign (see further Hatton 2001). '*Tckbrff* wish'd,' McDermot reports, 'that their Government might be chang'd to that of the *English*, for he often bewail'd the miserable consequences of unlimited Power in a Sovereign' (McDermot 1728: 24). Individual sovereigns, then, regardless of religious or political affiliations may be praised as virtuous so long as there is evidence to support a devotion to their subjects. Corruption of the monarch or among the courtiers, on the other hand, is an abhorrence to be deplored.

Migration and Irish experience

The distinction between 'English' and 'Irish' identity is often clearly demarcated in *A Trip to the Moon*. Tckbrff understands McDermot's description of George I as '*English*', for instance, as we have just seen. We have also observed how the English greeting 'How do you do?' is implicitly satirized. In a further example, the '*Englishman*' is derided as overly sensitive when McDermot reports that the Moon Doctor, who is a Wolf in form, advises him that 'the Humours of the Body . . . are as sensible of an Affront as an *Englishman*' (McDermot 1728: 13). The author's Irish identity and Irish experiences, on the other hand, are insisted upon repeatedly. The author's name, to begin with, is Gaelic in anglicized form. Murtagh, Gaelic Ó Muircheartaigh, means 'descendant of a navigator', appropriately enough, while McDermot (Gaelic Mac Diarmada), 'son of Dermot', is a surname originating in County Roscommon. It is not clear where McDermot actually comes from. He departs from and returns to Dublin, but finds that his friends have been 'remov'd to the *North* of *Ireland*' on his return to Dublin, and decides to follow them there (McDermot 1728: 89).

Overall, the protagonist's voyage is very much cast as a common Irish migratory experience. McDermot is a contemporary Irishman 'incapacitated by [his] Circumstances' who decides to 'turn Sailor' (McDermot 1728: 5). Having referenced '*our* Irish *Statutes*' in his preface, McDermot never lets us forget that he is Irish. His voyage begins at the Custom House in Dublin, where he offers his services to 'one James Anderson, Master of the *Runner*, a Vessel of about 75 Tun' setting sail on 6 June 1718 with a cargo of beef and dairy products, as well as candles and soap, bound for the Canary Islands, where they are due to pick up sugar. The description tallies with real-life Irish experiences of migration (see Ó Liatháin, Chapter 11: 181–2, this volume). On Tenerife, McDermot ventures alone on his hike up a mountain peak from whence he is lifted off by the whirlwind. As he reaches the peak, he finds himself vomiting up his recent meal due to the pure air which was 'very disagreeable' to his 'gross Constitution' on account of being accustomed to 'close and foggy Weather' in his own country (McDermot 1728: 8). The Hiberno-English word 'close', used to describe a high degree of humidity in the air, contributes to McDermot's insistent self-identification as an Irishman.

Throughout his narrative, McDermot repeatedly mentions Ireland or Irish customs. The character of a male cat, for instance, is said by McDermot to have spent a small fortune on his clothes, and 'contented himself with more ordinary Meals than an *Irish*

Footman wou'd do, when he eat at his own Expense' (McDermot 1728: 24). In another example, a female Lap-Dog called *Blmmsl*, popular on the Moon, 'would not . . . obtain the same Character in *Dublin*' we are told (McDermot 1728: 25), although she is imagined to be similar to 'our *Irish* Ladies' in other ways (McDermot 1728: 27). McDermot somehow earns Blmmsl's affection, which leads him to conclude: 'I could attribute my Success to nothing, but that I had hit the critical Minute, so much talk'd of in *Ireland*, when a Woman gives her Consent' (McDermot 1728: 34). Lest we see this as an early precursor to #MeToo, it is immediately followed by a hefty dose of misogyny. We are told that an extraordinary din McDermot mistakes for bells 'more loud and shrill than any Sound of Bells [he] had ever heard in *Ireland*' is, in fact, the sound of argumentative women. 'I could not but wish,' McDermot muses, 'that all loud-tongu'd Women in mine own Country were transported to the *Moon*, till I consider'd, that by that Means poor *Ireland* would find a great Scarcity of Wives, and perhaps in one Age be wholly uninhabited' (McDermot 1728: 36). The male fantasy of procreating without women has classical roots in, for example, speeches by Jason in Euripides' *Medea* and by Hippolytus in Euripides' eponymous tragedy.

Further references to Ireland include a report of McDermot's experience at the theatre on the Moon, where he meets the dreaded 'Critick'. Described as a 'Compound of many Brutes', McDermot declares that he 'cannot compare him to any one Brute that [he] saw in Ireland' (McDermot 1728: 49). Elsewhere, we are told the story of a Tree that retained the smell of excrement from an animal called a 'Namow', so that the inhabitants 'made as little use of it for a long time after, as they do of *Hemlock* in *Ireland*' (McDermot 1728: 32). And when McDermot leaves the Moon to venture homeward, he leaves 'an *Irish* Bottle-Skrew' with his dear Moon friend Tckbrff (McDermot 1728: 85).

The dates for McDermot's voyage span 6 June 1718 to 27 September 1720, while the text of *A Trip to the Moon* is published in 1727 and 1728. These dates overlap precisely with the first and second waves of Irish emigration from Ulster. Patrick Griffin summarizes (2002: 65):

> From 1718 to 1719, thousands of men and women from Ulster sailed for America. At first, the movement drew little attention from either the Irish or British government. When another wave crested by the late 1720s, however, administrators in both kingdoms grew alarmed at the growing scale of migration, fearing that as northern Presbyterians sailed to the New World, the Protestant cause in Ireland would suffer.

The sort of migration described by Griffin often precluded return to Ireland, but Patrick Fitzgerald (2017) has discussed the underexplored phenomenon of return migration from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, and Pádraig Ó Liatháin (Chapter 11, this volume) sheds light on seasonal economic migration common in eighteenth-century Ireland. Before returning, McDermot considers remaining permanently in his new home and offers his services as a soldier to the King (McDermot 1728: 58, 80), evoking a path frequently taken by Irish emigrants (cf., e.g., Philip O'Sullivan Beare,

discussed by Levin, Chapter 6, this volume). The fact of his return is, moreover, encapsulated in a classical parody in the preface of the text where McDermot asserts, 'I went, I saw, I return'd', evoking and reframing the famous phrase attributed to Julius Caesar *veni, vidi, vici*, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.' With 'return'd' substituted for 'conquered', McDermot highlights that he chose a non-military path.

Considered against the backdrop of mass emigration, *A Trip to the Moon* can be seen to feed into the fantasy of *imagining* migration. In a touch of irony, McDermot chooses to settle down on his return in the very centre of the migratory exodus from the north of Ireland. He knows something of the area, too, making a large boat while in the parrot colony which is 'not unlike those made use of in the North of *Ireland*' (McDermot 1728: 88).

A Trip to the Moon: conclusions

McDermot's *A Trip to the Moon* has been largely neglected and dismissed. Marjorie Hope Nicolson's ostensibly comprehensive 1948 monograph on *Voyages to the Moon*, reprinted in 1960, relegates the work to a footnote with the following statement: 'That voyage itself is so derivative that I have not discussed it in the text' (1960: 161, n.). In fact, it is not entirely clear what is overly derivative about the work, and Nicolson's only further comment in the footnote highlights a novelty in McDermot's use of gunpowder to effect his transportation back to Earth. Bleiler and Bleiler's short synopsis concludes with a reductive assessment: 'The satire is flat and undeveloped' (1991: 462). Fennell offers a more neutral one-page summary (2019: 32). Only Welcher and Bush (1970: vii–xi) and Borgmeier (1989: 124–7), briefly, along with Ní Chuachanáin (2016: 124–31), in somewhat more detail, provide further analysis and context in relation to other narratives of lunar voyages, as noted throughout this chapter. Welcher and Bush (1970: xi) are outliers in articulating, however briefly, the distinctive merits and successes of McDermot's *A Trip to the Moon* and lamenting its neglect by critics. It is not insignificant, for instance, that this is, chronologically, the very first of their Gulliveriana texts, notwithstanding that they seem unaware of the even earlier 1727 printing and refer only to the printing of 1728. They also point to the possible impact of McDermot's work in influencing a Gulliverian pamphlet entitled *The Asiniad: A Second Satire upon a Certain Wooden-Man Revived by the Pseudonymous Martin Gulliver* (1730), which features a character named Murtagh (Welcher and Bush 1970: vii–viii; cf. Ní Chuachanáin 2016: 125).

It has been argued here that McDermot's *A Trip to the Moon* offers a valuable and overtly Irish-inflected satire on a volatile period in eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish politics, and that it does so by framing itself as a descendant of Lucian's *True History* (via Swift) far more directly than do other contemporary Irish Utopian works. McDermot's signposting of Lucian's text, indeed, may be more loaded than straightforward satirical inspiration. Lucian was a Syrian living in Athens under the Roman Empire, an imperial subject from the periphery of the realm, whose *True History* at times questions colonialist policies. Steven Smith has argued, for instance, that greed and imperial acquisition are linked in Lucian, and that the desire for imperial expansion is presented as ubiquitous at

a time when the Roman Empire itself faced threats on its borders (Smith 2009). For an Irish author, then, living during a period of tense political relations with the ruling colonial power, and a developing sense of independent Irish nationalism, Lucian's *True History* may have contributed to reflections on politics as well as on satire, metaliterary craft and migratory travel. [4]

Notes

1. Quotations throughout this chapter come from the 1728 London printing, as it has not been possible to locate a copy of the 1727 Dublin printing for consultation.
2. Curiously, in their edition reprinting McDermot and Gentleman's works together in the first volume of *Gulliveriana*, Welcher and Bush (1970: vii) describe McDermot's text as 'the first Irish Gulliverian imitation of the eighteenth century and also the last', although Gentleman himself was also Irish. This seemingly reflects the overt Irish inflections of McDermot's narrative in contrast to Gentleman who uses Albion as the main frame of reference.
3. Hawes (2010) gives an excellent and informative overview of Swift's constitutional nationalism within the complex web of eighteenth-century Irish politics.
4. I am indebted to Karen Ní Mheallaigh and Rocío Sumillera for valuable feedback on an earlier draft of this chapter, alongside audiences at the November 2022 conference in Aarhus, where the paper was first presented, and in Galway, October 2024, where a revised version was presented as the Margaret Heavey Memorial Lecture.

CHAPTER 11

EACHTRA GHIOLLA AN AMARÁIN 'THE VOYAGE OF THE HOSTAGE TO MISFORTUNE': VIRGIL'S *AENEID* AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRISH MIGRATIONS

Pádraig Ó Liatháin

The eighteenth–century work *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* ('The Voyage of the Hostage to Misfortune') by Donncha Rua Mac Conmara (1715?–1810), a multilingual well-travelled poet, who wrote in Irish, English and Latin, presents the narrator's journey beginning at home in Waterford in the southeast of Ireland, and following him across the sea to a place often assumed to be Newfoundland, Canada. This identifiable journey, however, develops into an imagined voyage, as the poet finds himself in the Underworld, subsequently in a battle at sea, and finally back home again. In the second part of *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, Book 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, charting the hero's experiences in Hades, is imaginatively adapted to feature both classical and Irish literary, heroic and political figures from Hector to Fionn Mac Cumhaill, and from Conán Mac Mórna to Caesar and George III. The fairy goddess Aoibheall's presence is also crucial, conflating a Sibyl-like role with an embodiment of the *aisling* ('vision') tradition, a particularly prevalent trope in eighteenth-century Irish-language poetry.

Details of how Donncha Rua's text engages with, and rewrites, Virgil's original have been well studied (see especially McElduff 2011), and knowledge of classical authors among the eighteenth-century Irish-speaking population has likewise been proven (O'Higgins 2017). It is argued here that, within its contemporary context, the *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* of Donncha Rua is unique, both as an engagement with classical literature and as a reflection on contemporary Irish experiences of migration. Although the poem presents an imagined voyage, Donncha Rua is the only Irish-language poet, and the most prominent Irish literary figure, to reference lived experiences in Newfoundland in the eighteenth century and related issues of migration. He was also the first man of letters to identify Newfoundland by its Irish-language place name, Talamh an Éisc ('The Fishing Grounds'), a toponym still in use in spoken Irish to this day (Ó Liatháin 2021), with Newfoundland being an important destination for Irish migrants in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Irish migration to Newfoundland

Literary critics and historians have sometimes assumed that *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* simply recounts an epic-style literary journey, but there is strong evidence to suggest that

Donncha Rua was in fact writing about his own life experience of travel to Newfoundland (Ó Liatháin 2018: 12–21). The detailed list of supplies mentioned in the poem as preparation for the voyage corresponds uncannily to records of voyages from the time, such as that of James Napper, a New Ross merchant who owned an independent commercial boat, captained by a man called Allen, and requested permission to sail to St John's, the capital of Newfoundland, in 1742 (Ó Liatháin 2018: 63):

a liacht beatha, mionearra agus gréithre,
do thug an pobal i bhfochair a chéile,
chum ár gcothaithe i gcogadh nó spéirling,
stór ná caillfeadh suim do laethaibh,
agus comhra doimhin ina dtoillfinn féin ann,
do bhí seacht gclocha do mhin choirce ghlanchréithre ann,
is dríodar chrochta na loiste re chéile,
is lán an bharaille b'fhearra bhí in Éirinn,
de photátaí leathana d'eagla géarbhroid,
do bhí seacht bhfichid ubh circe agus éanla ann,
le haghaidh a n-imhte chó minic 's ba mhéin linn,
cróca an ime do dingeadh le saothar,
spóla soille ba throime 's ba mhéithe;
do thugas caig leanna ann do lasfadh le séideadh,
is chuirfeadh na mairbh 'na mbeatha dá mb'fhéidir,
leaba agus clúda i gciumhais a chéile,
ceangailte ar dhrom mo thrunc le téadaibh,
bhí bróga istigh ann, wig is béabhar,
agus stór mar sin anois ná déarfad.

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin, *34–52*

so much food, goods and treasures,
the people brought all together,
to sustain us in war or strife,
a reserve that a number of days would not diminish,
and a deep chest which I myself would fit into.
There was seven stone of clean-sifted oatmeal,
and the shaken dregs of the losset together,
and the best barrel-full in Ireland,
of broad potatoes for fear of harsh want,
there were seven score hens' and birds' eggs,
for the buttering, as often as we wished,
a crock of butter packed in firmly,
the heaviest and most succulent joint;
I brought a keg of beer that would light with blowing [?],
and would bring the dead to life if it were possible,

bed and bedding all wrapped up,
tied to the back of my chest with strings,
there were shoes inside there, a wig and a beaver
and similar treasure I will not mention now.[1]

Ultimately, although the poem is a sort of *aisling* (discussed further below), or at least an account of a fictional, unfulfilled voyage due to a sea attack, it remains important to note that there is no other such source in Irish-language literature that depicts a journey to the New World in the eighteenth century. The historical context for this transatlantic connection is, of course, migration. The movement of Irish people to Newfoundland differed from the patterns of Irish migration to other parts of North America. It was predominantly Catholic working poor from southeast Ireland who migrated to Newfoundland to fish, mostly for cod; Newfoundland was the first region of North America to be exploited, and Irish migration began before 1700 and continued until the mid-nineteenth century. Professor John Mannion has established that migrations to Newfoundland were unique, in that no other province in Canada or state in America drew its migrants and immigrants from such a small area, namely Waterford and its hinterland within roughly a forty-mile radius. It seems significant, in this context, to observe Donncha Rua's provenance from Waterford, and the fact that his *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* opens with a departure from Waterford. By the mid-eighteenth century, migrants departed from Waterford, Cork, Kilkenny, Wexford and Tipperary, transported by ships arriving from southwest England and ports such as Poole, Dartmouth, Topsham, Tinmouth and Plymouth, having gathered men willing to work and stocked up on goods such as salted meat and butter for the journey ahead. This migration was seasonal, with Irishmen typically spending two summers and at least one winter working in Newfoundland before returning home. Gradually, some began to remain in Newfoundland for the winter, leading to settlement (Mannion 1978, 1986).

Ternua, Terra Nova, Newfoundland, and La Terre-Neuve are different names for the most easterly island of Canada, the stretch of land off the American continent closest to Ireland. Its Irish version, Talamh an Éisc (meaning 'the fishing grounds' or 'territory'), bestowed upon it by Irish speakers based on their experience of the island, remains in use. While it may seem unsurprising that speakers of a language would name a new territory, this was not common in the Irish language, which almost always used either existing toponyms or transliterations. Additionally, Irish speakers in North America did not typically coin their own toponyms and maintain them, making the use of Talamh an Éisc even more noteworthy as an articulation of the specific significance of Newfoundland for the migratory experiences of Irish fishermen.

Mac Conmara makes specific references to Newfoundland in his other works, including the poem '*Donchadh Ruadh do Aodh Ó Cealladh nó Fáilte Aodh ó Thalamh an Éisg*' ('Donncha Rua to Aodh Ó Ceallaigh or Welcome Aodh from Newfoundland'). This poem, which defends the honour of a man known to Mac Conmara in Newfoundland, contains the earliest written use of the term 'Talamh an Éisc' that I have found in any source. It seems to have been composed around the mid-eighteenth century and Talamh an Éisc is

explicitly mentioned in five of its six verses. The poem also provides information on fishing matters, documenting the poet's knowledge of life and work on the island. Mac Conmara describes the work Ó Ceallaigh was undertaking, using lexical borrowings of fishing terms from the English language that were central to life in Newfoundland, such as 'stage' and 'flake' (*fléice*), terms referring to the process of drying and salting fish by the shore, which was, after fishing, the most common employment for Irish migrants at that time.

In his macaronic poem 'As I Was Walking One Evening Fair', also composed in the mid-eighteenth century, Mac Conmara refers to Newfoundland's capital Baile Sheáin (i.e., St John's), the main place of settlement on the island. The earliest surviving version of the poem dates from 1756 and contains the opening lines 'As I was Walking One Evening Fair / *Me go Déinach a mBaille cSeaghain*' ('. . . and I lately in St John's'). This is also the earliest identified example of an Irish translation for the island's capital. The manuscript 23 A 16 from the Royal Irish Academy was transcribed in Cloyne in east Cork, a district that had strong connections with Newfoundland. As Lillis Ó Laoire has explored, this Jacobite poem illustrates the poet's bravura and linguistic daring in intertwining both languages humorously and subversively. Within the poem, the island and its British rulers are ironically praised in the English language: 'Newfoundland is a wide plantation . . . Come drink a health, boys, to royal George.' With English being the main language of the island, Anglophones with Protestant sympathies would understand, and presumably enjoy, one half of the poem, without being aware that they are mocked in the Irish part of the poem. Clearly, Mac Conmara composed this with the Irish-speaking migrants of Newfoundland in mind and for those at home in Ireland with an understanding of its context. As in *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, the element of the underdog as the cleverest of all comes through; those in power are mocked in a language they cannot understand, thus they are entertained by their amusing colonial subjects and take no insult from the event.

Mac Conmara's best known work is, in fact, the nostalgic work on exile composed in Newfoundland, '*Bánchnoic Aoibhin Éirion*' ('The Fair Hills of Ireland'). I refer specifically here to a copy of the poem which was recently discovered in a manuscript transcribed by Tomás Ó hAitheirne *circa* 1821, held by the John Rylands Library in Manchester, which contains the following note at the foot of the manuscript page: *an tan do bhidh Donchadh ruadh a ttalamh an éisg do canadh an laoi-si leis* ('during the time Donncha Rua was in Newfoundland this song was composed by him'). This scribe was a teacher who copied the manuscript in Stradbally, Co. Waterford, and who, by all accounts, knew Mac Conmara personally. The poem itself wistfully describes the homesickness and longing of being far from his native land, '*míle míle [i] gcéin, ó Bhánchnoic Éirion Ó*' ('one thousand miles from the fair hills of Ireland') as opposed to what he deems the comparatively inhospitable landscape of Newfoundland. The sense of homesickness of the poet as exile pervades the work, as does his idealized version of his homeland.

One other contemporary manuscript scribe connects migration to Talamh an Éisc with Mac Conmara. In the diary entries of the schoolmaster Amhlaoibh Ó Súilleabháin (Humphrey O'Sullivan), written in south County Kilkenny in 1830, he writes on 21 April:

> *Is dardalach duir an aimsir ag eachtrainigh Thalamh an Éisg é. Ní maga acht darfhíre gur deirc le n-a n-urmhor bheith san bhaile no a ccalapuirt eigin mar Giolla an Amaráin no Donchadh Ruadh Mac na Mara . . .*
>
> The weather is harsh and unforgiving for the Newfoundland adventurers. It is no joke but deadly serious that most would rather be at home or in some safe port like the Hostage to Misfortune or Donncha Rua Mac Conmara.
>
> *in McGrath 1936: 266–8*

Moreover, O'Sullivan not only transcribed Donncha Rua's poem in 1811, which appears in the Royal Irish Academy MS 23 L 2, but he lived in an area (Callan, in south Kilkenny) from which people regularly travelled to Newfoundland.

In the following discussion, I will first set Donncha Rua's engagement with Virgil within its contemporary context before drawing out the implications of *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* for understanding Irish experiences of migration.

Donncha Rua Mac Conmara, Virgil and *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* in context

According to his obituary in the *Freeman's Journal* (5 November 1810), Donncha Rua died in Waterford 'in the 95th year of his age'. Irish-language manuscript evidence attests that the poet spent most of his adult life in the vicinity of Waterford, although the poet seems to have been born near Cratloe in east county Clare, on the west coast. Folklore sources stretching back into the nineteenth century tell us that Mac Conmara enrolled for the priesthood in an Irish College in Rome without completing his course of study (see Ó Liatháin 2018: 12–15). It was quite common during this period for Irish Catholics of means and intellectual capacity to receive as satisfactory an education as possible in Ireland to prepare them for their acceptance in universities on the Continent for further training. To the best of my knowledge, no evidence exists of Donncha Rua's presence in Rome in any of the four Irish colleges there, nor was he ever ordained. Roughly 50 per cent of those who attended the Irish colleges never received their degrees, and indeed, many may never have intended anything other than availing of the only opportunity for higher learning that was available to them (O'Connor 2008: 42–91). Wherever he was educated, however, Donncha Rua was clearly versed in Latin letters. A reading of *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* makes this evident, as does the fact that he composed an elegy in Latin for the poet Tadhg Gaelach Ó Súilleabháin (*c.* 1715–95), when Donncha Rua himself was around eighty years old (Ó Liatháin 2018: 9–38).

As was typically the case with Irish-language literature of the time, *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* was not immediately published after its composition in the eighteenth century, instead being transmitted orally and in manuscript form (see Ó Muircheartaigh, Chapter 9, this volume, on the circulation of Irish manuscripts). Around sixty copies of the poem survive in manuscripts housed in various repositories in Ireland and abroad,

dating from 1758 to around 1860 (Ó Liatháin 2018). The earliest version of the poem, M85 in the Russell Library in Maynooth, an autograph copy, is 290 lines long and can be briefly summarized thus. *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*'s knowingly intertextual introduction borrows heavily from Irish seventeenth-century political poems such as *Tuireamh na hÉireann* ('The Dirge of Ireland') by Seán Ó Conaill and the anonymous *An Síogaí Rómhánach* ('The Roman Vision'). Both poems themselves featured references to Graeco-Roman antiquity in articulating experiences of migration and exile (see entries compiled by Gregory R. Darwin 2022: https://classicalirish.au.dk/). In *Tuireamh na hÉireann*, for instance, the ancestors of the Gaels wander the Mediterranean visiting many of the same sites as Odysseus before arriving in Ireland, and are said to have worshipped the gods of Greece and Rome before the arrival of St Patrick. *An Síogaí Rómhánach*, on the other hand, presents the poet being visited at the graves of Hugh O'Neill and Rory O'Donnell in Rome by a vision of a beautiful woman, who is like Venus or Minerva and prophesies the rise of the Gaels and the expulsion of foreign invaders.

The connections between classical antiquity, themes of exile and migration, and Irish political poetry are both captivating and thought-provoking. They provide a rich tapestry of historical, cultural and literary elements that intersect and inform one another in a compelling manner. This approach allows poets to explore and reflect upon the enduring struggles and experiences of migration and political strife, drawing connections between the time of writing and the tales of classical figures. It provides a lens through which the poets can comment on their own society, emphasizing the need for social and political change. In *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, Donncha Rua turns from a brief lament on the plight of the native Irish to his own personal circumstances as a reluctant and penniless schoolteacher. This is a marked departure from the poetic conventions of the time which lack personal elements or an autobiographical narrative such as this, while here the focus is on Donncha Rua as traveller and anti-hero. It is similarly a satirical domestication of the Virgilian model. Whereas Virgil famously sings of 'arms and the man', the *giolla* in Donncha Rua's title, which can be translated as 'hostage' in this context, or 'lackey' perhaps, also has 'the same range of semantic meaning in Irish as *puer* [boy, servant, slave] does in Latin' (McElduff 2011: 229).

Donncha Rua informs us that, although he could lament the current fate of the Gaels, or even recount a story from his broad knowledge of native literature, he shall instead regale us with tales of his own adventures, both epic and trifling. Thus, having made the decision to leave his life of penury behind, he commences preparations for a great journey, recounting everything he and his adoring public pack for him in his sea chest, before describing what unfolds between himself and a servant girl in a hostelry in Waterford city, his antiheroic version of Virgil's Dido (cf. McElduff 2011: 232–3). He recounts setting sail from Passage (a port town a few miles east of Waterford city), lists the ship's cargo and describes the seasickness suffered by himself and the entire crew early in the journey. At this point, his most fervent wish is to return home, but the Irish fairy goddess Aoibheall suddenly appears, sweeping him off with her to the Underworld. Here, Conán Mac Mórna, a familiar comic figure from Irish mythology, awaits as their guide, and after an extensive tour of Hades, where many famous classical figures are

identified, Conán foresees the return to former greatness of the Gael, and the removal from power of the Gall (foreigner). Donncha Rua then awakes, back on the ship which is under attack from a French frigate. Despite being buffeted, the ship and its crew manage to struggle back to Waterford, and upon reaching his beloved shore, the poet vows never to set sail again.

The intertextual aspects of the work, which engage with Virgil's *Aeneid* and themes of migration and exile, serves as a literary doorway, guiding readers into the subsequent content of the work. They establish a bridge between the classical world and the contemporary Irish experience, highlighting the timelessness and universality of these themes while simultaneously grounding them in lived hardships. The impact of *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* has not been insignificant. It has garnered the attention of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars and writers as diverse as James Hardiman, James Clarence Mangan, Samuel Ferguson, Standish Hayes O'Grady, W. B. Yeats, Austin Clarke and Francis Mac Manus (in his trilogy *Stand and Give Challenge*, *Candle for the Proud* and *Men Withering*). A play on Donncha Rua's time in Newfoundland was also staged in the Abbey Theatre in the late 1930s (Ó Liatháin 2022), while scholarly interest in *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* commenced in the early nineteenth century. In the 1820 *Transactions of the Iberno-Celtic Society*, for instance, Edward O'Reilly compares the poem favourably with Virgil's:

> . . . a mock *Aeneid*, in which there are some lines by no means inferior to any of Virgil's. The shout of Charon, as described by the Irish bard . . . is, perhaps, superior to the Cyclops' roar of the Mantuan poet.
>
> *O'Reilly 1820: ccxxxi*

As is well known, Virgil's *Aeneid* was a central text in the literary and cultural history of Europe, achieving a status that remained unchanged throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Hardie 2014; Curtius 1953). Unsurprisingly, Virgil was also held in high regard within the Irish-language literary tradition, due to the historical importance of Latin in the education of Irish-language poets and scholars (Dowling 1968; Mac Manus 2004; O'Higgins 2017). One of the best examples of this is *Imtheachta Aeniasa* ('The Wanderings of Aeneas'), the medieval Irish-language adaptation of the text and the first vernacular translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* in any language (Calder 1907; Poppe 2024). A clear illustration of the tragic story of the past few hundred years of Irish-language literature, where medieval Irish texts were no longer accessible to contemporary poets/scribes, is the strong likelihood that, although Donncha Rua read the *Aeneid* in its Latin original, he would probably never have seen the medieval Irish version (although he did transcribe the late medieval bardic poetry of Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh, a thirteenth-century Clare poet; see M85, Maynooth's Russell Library). Nevertheless, the fact that Donncha Rua engaged so liberally with the *Aeneid* reflects the freedom of the poet, and of the Irish literary tradition itself, in that he was willing to draw on such a venerated text with cleverness and daring, shaping and remoulding it to suit his narrative. This had been the attitude towards classical Greek and Latin literature by Irish writers for a long

time, as texts were adapted and adopted into the native tradition in a unique way. As Stanford observed in *Ireland and the Classical Tradition*, Irish-language authors

> . . . showed no sign of deferential awe towards classical antiquity . . . these anonymous translators and adapters of classical poems and myths took what they found interesting and attractive and used it freely and imaginatively without any sense of inferiority . . . They had their own illustrious kings and heroes to match those of Greece and Rome. Besides, they had their own sophisticated methods of story-telling and poetry making.
>
> *Stanford 1984: 73*[2]

Irish poets' high regard for classical learning and references to Virgil in the manuscript literature contemporary with Donncha Rua are relatively commonplace. The only obituary written for the great poet Dáibhí Ó Bruadair (1625–98) in any language was Father Conchubhar Mac Carteáin's Latin *In mortem Davidis Broder, Poetac clarissimi Elegia* (de Brún 1967). Irish poets were often praised in poetry for their expertise and skill in Latin and Greek. For example, Seán na Raithíneach wrote on the death of Seán Clárach Mhac Domhnaill (1691–1754):

> *seabhac na sáimhe, sás na scéal do scríobhadh*
> *i Laidin go breágh, i mBéarla nó i nGréigis ghlinn.*
>
> *Ó Donnchadha 1954: 282*
>
> The hawk of peace, he was the very man to write a story well
> in Latin, English or in vivid Greek.

In another example, Aindrias Mac Craith's poem composed in honour of Seán Ó Tuama (1707/8–75) praises his multilingualism:

> *Is gaoiseach gasta do canadh gach bhéarsa,*
> *is líomhtha labhródh Laidean is Béarla,*
> *is binn 's is blasta do cheapadh i nGaedhilge.*
>
> *Ó Foghludha 1952: 158*
>
> Wisely and swiftly he used to sing every verse,
> fluently he would speak Latin and English,
> and sweetly and melodiously he composed in Irish.

We have seen in Chapter 8 (Darwin) how seventeenth-century Irish-language poets evoked Graeco-Roman antiquity to express political experiences of exile and dispossession. For the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, we have further evidence that Irish poets and scribes had access to the works of classical authors, including Virgil. We know that the poet, scribe and intellectual Tadhg Ó Neachtain (*c.* 1670–*c.* 1752) possessed a book by Virgil because he lent it to a friend (Harrison 1999: 46), and the *Aeneid* was in the

library of the scribe Pádraig Ó Néill (1765–1832) in south Kilkenny, along with a Greek–Latin dictionary and a copy of a Latin translation of the *Iliad* (Ó Néill 1988: 79–85). Tomás Ó Aitheirne (dates unknown), a student of Donncha Rua from Stradbally in Waterford, copied lines from Virgil's *Georgics* and was working on a translation of the *Iliad* (Ó Macháin 2003, 2004). As a further example, Fínin Ó Hallúráin's (a mid-nineteenth century scribe in Co. Cork; see Ó Conchúir: 80–1) copying of Dáibhí de Barra's (1758?–1851) manuscripts included the Royal Irish Academy manuscript 23 D 39, which contains lines by Virgil and some prose in Greek (Uí Chatháin 2006: 57). In his book *Eolas ar an Domhan* ('Knowledge of the World'), writing about Italy, Tadhg Ó Neachtain refers to Virgil's native area:

> *Mantua: an tír ádhluinn thorramhuil í? Is eadh, 7 cathair láidir a lár locha ionna bhfhuil 20 míle 'na timchiolla; 7 is innte do ruga Virgil an file, mar adeir féin ionna Ecclogs, Mantua me genuit.*
>
> *Ní Chléirigh 1944: 54*
>
> Mantua: is it a beautiful fertile territory? It is, and a strong city in the middle of a lake surrounded by 20 miles; and it is there that the poet Virgil was born, as he himself says in his Eclogue, *Mantua me genuit*.

As this brief survey demonstrates, Virgil had standing in the Irish tradition; the listener would have known who he was, and it would have been implicitly understood that the poet who referred to him was a learned person, regardless of whether or not this classical name-dropping may sometimes have been mere scholarly posturing, as seems likely in the exaggerated claims made in the seventeenth-century poem '*Aiste Dháibhí Cundún*' ('Dáibhí Cundún's Composition'):

> *Do léas leabhair seannda na nGréagach,*
> *is gach stair dár ceapadh i dteanga na n-Éabhrach,*
> *is gach ar sgríobhadh ar Phuímp is ar Caesar*
> *is gach ar smúinig Plútarch d'fhéachas,*
> *is ar sgríobh Hómer, rós na héigse,*
> *'s ar sgríobh Virgil ar imeachtaibh Aonguis.*
>
> *O'Rahilly 1952: 42*
>
> I read the ancient books of the Greeks,
> and every history composed in the Hebrew language,
> and on everything written on Pompey and Caesar,
> and upon everything Plutarch contemplated I looked,
> and on what Homer, the rose of learning wrote,
> and on what Virgil wrote of the affairs of Aeneas.

Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín (1680–1755), to whom we will return, mentions Virgil in an early eighteenth-century poem, '*A Bhanba is feasach dom mo scéala*' ('O Banbha [i.e. Ireland]

I am familiar with your tidings'), as does Seán Clárach Mhac Domhnaill (mentioned above) in a lament for his friend, Tomás Ó Catháin:

cogadh láidir Dárius bhaothlaig,
mar is léir i gcroinicí tofa na nGréagach,
stair na dTurcach 'na gcuirtear a n-éachta,
ar scríobhadh le Hómer, rós na héagna,
ar scríobhadh le Virgil in iomad riocht réime,
is ar chan Óvid san gcló céanna.

Mac Cruitín in Morley 2011: 140

the strong war of Darius the weak and foolish,
as is clear in the fine chronicles of the Greeks,
the history of the Turks in which their achievements are put,
on what Homer wrote, the rose of learning,
of what Virgil wrote in many forms of rule,
and what Ovid sang in the same vein.

Ba bhlasta ód bheólsa cóir-stair Gaoilge,
'S ar canadh le Hómer ar dhó na Traoi Thoir;
Virgil 's Óvid cé mór a scríobh siad
B'aithnid duit fós 's go leor ná ríomhaimse.

Mhac Domhnaill in Seoighe 1965: 99

The just history of the Irish language was sweet from your mouth,
as was what Homer sang of the burning of East Troy;
Virgil and Ovid although great is the amount they wrote,
this was known to you and much else that I do not calculate.

Later nineteenth-century examples can be found in the work of the famous blind poet Raftery, such as his praise poems '*Cnocán an Eanaigh*' (in praise of the eponymous townland in Kiltullagh parish, Galway) and '*Brídín Bhéasaí*' (in praise of a beautiful young woman, Brídín Vesey), respectively:

Hóimear ná Horás ní scríobhfadh a cháilíocht,
ná Virgil dá bhreáichte dár thrácht sé ar an Traí.

Ó Coigligh 2000: 46–7

Neither Homer nor Horace could write of its [the place's] distinction,
nor Virgil although beautifully he wrote of Troy.

A scéimh, a cruth is a breáichte,
ní scríobhfadh Virgil ráithe.

Ó Coigligh 2000: 95

Of her [Brídín's] beauty, shape and splendour,
Virgil would not write in a season.

This overview of references to Virgil by poets and authors roughly contemporaneous with Donncha Rua gives us an insight into how remarkable and personal his own reshaping of material from Virgil's *Aeneid* was in the second half of *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*. Whereas contemporaries often mention Virgil and other classical authors briefly, Donncha Rua's work is an extended engagement with *Aeneid* 6. This intertextual approach was in keeping with a European tradition of drawing on the *Aeneid*, particularly the Underworld episodes of Book 6, which began in the late Middle Ages, with Dante's 'Inferno' as the best-known example, and continued into the seventeenth century (see, e.g., Farrell and Putnam 2010: 121–250). A little-studied English example of a satirical application of the Virgilian model is *The Irish Hudibras* or *Fingallian Prince*, published in 1689 by James Farewell (1666–89). The Underworld of the *Aeneid* is transposed by Farewell to Stuart Ireland and presented through the adventures of an Irish prince where he and the Irish people are portrayed as superstitious, ignorant and uncivilized. McElduff (2011: 240–2) argues that Donncha Rua may have been influenced to write his own *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* as a response.

Donncha Rua was certainly fluent in English, as well as Irish and Latin. He composed one poem in English (Mac Peaircín 2006), but he does not make references to major English authors in his work. There could be many reasons for that, but it is difficult to assess the influence of satirical English literature on Donncha Rua in the absence of evidence. In any case, Irish-language writers had an existing tradition of evoking Graeco-Roman subject matter in a comic or satirical manner. One might remember Aogán Ó Rathille's mock encomium praising his shoes, for example, said to be forged by Vulcan (*Ar Bhróghaibh do Bronnadh air*, 'On the Shoes that were Presented to him', 1724), or Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin's *A chara mo chléibh* ('O bosom buddy'), asking his friend Séamas Mac Gearailt to take up working the spade heroically by his side like Samson or Achilles (Dinneen and O'Donoghue 1911: 102; Ua Duinnín 1901: 54–5).

Aoibheall of Craglea, Conán Mac Mórna and Irish heroes among the classical

To reinforce the fact that *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* draws upon Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, the relevant section of the poem in the manuscripts often sees a short break inserted, with its own prose introduction in the manuscript copies, and Donncha Rua himself leaves a discernible gap in his autograph copy between lines 136 and 137, thus implying a new departure in the poem. An early copy of the poem, from 1777, includes the following prefatory summary:

An dara Roínt iona ttrachtar ar ionngantas adhbhal mhóir na a modh aislinnge a neolachus re Aoibhal na Craige Leithe air ndall san áitse a raidthear Elisium ar an

> *radhairc an sin 7 air tharanngeacht conann Maoil ar tteacht as sin is ar casa an sa loing fhranncach ar dteacht a baille agus/ ar eadarguide féin fa dheoigh.*
>
> The second part, discussing the amazing wonder, in the form of an aisling, concerning what befalls [the travellers] with Aoibheall of Craglea on their journey to the place called Elysium, the sights there and the prophecy of Conán Maol, their departure from there and meeting a French ship, the return home and finally an intercession.

In Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas reaches Cumae, where the Sibyl, prophetess of Apollo, lives. The Sibyl descends with him as his guide in the Underworld, where they meet the shade of his father, Anchises. Anchises reveals the impending glory of Rome, projecting forward to Virgil's present from the perspective of the past. Despite enduring many trials to reach this point, Aeneas hopes for better days ahead and that he may soon establish a new home city for his people. A key feature of Aeneas' experience in the Underworld is his encountering of numerous significant deceased figures. The corresponding section of *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* includes its own array of figures from Irish-language literature and history, such as Aoibheall, Conán Mac Mórna, Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín and the Fianna. Aoibheall of Craglea (Aoibheall na Carraige Léithe), goddess of North Munster and protector of the sept of the Dál gCais, mirrors Virgil's Sibyl who assists Aeneas with his entry into the Underworld.

Aoibheall, who also features in the later well-known eighteenth-century poem *Cúirt an mheon-oíche* ('The Midnight Court') by Brian Merriman, appears in *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* to the poet on board the ship and takes him down to Hades. She embodies the political *aisling* (dream) tradition, particularly prevalent in Irish-language poetry of the eighteenth century, a distinctive genre that features allegorical dream visions wherein the poetic persona encounters a beautiful, otherworldly woman who embodies Ireland. This symbolic female figure laments the state of Ireland, depicted as a suffering, oppressed land. The poems blend political commentary with romantic and mythological elements, expressing the poet's hope for an idealized Ireland free from foreign influence, while also critiquing the political, social and cultural ills of the time. These *aisling* poems became a powerful form of protest and cultural expression during the eighteenth century, reflecting the era's complex political dynamics (Ó Buachalla 1996). However, unlike her role in most poems of the era, here there is a marked difference. Aoibheall does not purport to embody Ireland as a maiden in the text, and she does not at any stage refer to the political climate of the time; it is in fact Conán who does so, while in the Underworld.

Conán Mac Morna is usually a comic figure in Fenian tales, having evolved from being an originally malicious character into a more clownish role in post-medieval literature (Ó hÓgáin 2006). As Donncha Rua's first point of contact in Hades, Conán assumes the role of both Charon as the poet's ferryman, and later appears to parallel Anchises' function as a guide in the Underworld. The political statements of Conán, predicting the restoration of the Stuart dynasty and the downfall of the English, correspond perfectly with those of the *aisling* tradition, whereas in fact, dialogue between

the poet and Aoibheall, which would be typical in *aisling* poetry, is limited. The only time the goddess speaks to him directly is when she instructs him to trust her implicitly, and informs him of the enlightening prospect of the journey ahead:

do thug go haibidh sí freagra in éiric:
'Ná cuireadh beart ar bith fearg ná fraoch ort,
ná déana iongantas do nithibh an tsaogail,
ná tréig mise go bhfillead 's ní baol duit;
radharc ná fuair fir Thuamhan is léir go
bhfaghairse uaimse is luadh do shaothair.'

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, 149–54*

she smartly answered me in return:
'let nothing at all anger or vex you,
do not make a wonder of the things of the world,
do not leave me until I return, and you are safe;
it is clear that a sight the men of Tuamhain never got
you will get from me and reward for your effort.'

The second and final time she speaks is to appease Conán, who is enraged by the presence of a mortal, echoing the Sibyl's speech appeasing Charon at the presence of Aeneas and pointing out the golden bough in his possession (*Aeneid* 6.399-406). In Donncha Rua's version, Aoibheall silences Conán by informing him of the illustrious Gaelic heritage of her companion (no golden bough required!), which is sufficient for the poet to be accepted across the river:

'Fóill, a churaidh,' ar an bhiochardha mhaorga,
'Tóig do churtha is glac iomchar réitigh,
duine gan bhuairt do fuair me i ngéarbhroid,
do chineachaibh uabhair is d'uaislibh Éireann.'

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, 183–6*

'Wait, o champion,' said the tender noble woman,
'Lift your anger and adopt conciliatory bearing,
he is a harmless fellow I found oppressed,
of the proud races and of the nobles of Ireland.'

No mortal should present to the Underworld, of course, unless, perhaps, he is an epic hero accompanying the boatman across the river. Even in such an instance, however, the boatman must be convinced by honeyed words and explanations to get permission to cross. Charon is the ferryman by the river Styx in the *Aeneid*, who brings the dead across, and is an authoritarian, cruel figure in the classic reading. Just as Donncha Rua inserts Aoibheall as an Irish alternative to the Sibyl figure, so he overtly challenges convention

by claiming that Conán, rather than Charon, runs the ferry to the Underworld. He wryly informs us that those who have hoped for Virgil's version of the story are to be disappointed:

's é chloisinn dá rá ag lucht ráite is léighbhinn
gurbh é duine bhí i mbád ann Charon méirscreach;
adeirimse leo gur dóibh is bréag san,
acht cleathaire mór do phór na hÉireann.
Do chímís ann seanbhád, tú dá thiomáin go saothrach,
a dhíthreabhaigh ghalánta, a Chonáin na Féinne.

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin, *165–70*

What I used to hear being said by authorities and scholars,
was that the man in the boat there was scarred Charon;
I am saying to them that they speak falsely,
rather [he is] a big strong man of Irish stock.
We could see an old boat there, [with] you driving it laboriously,
O gallant recluse, O Conán of the Fian!

Charon speaks thus when he sees Aeneas before him (*Aeneid* 6.388-9):

'quisquis es, armatus qui nostra ad flumina tendis,
fare age, quid venias, iam istinc, et comprime gressum.'

'Whoever you are who come to our river in arms, tell me, even from there, why you come, and check your step.'

trans. Fairclough and Gould 1999: 559

In the comparable section of Donncha Rua, however, Conán threatens Aoibheall on seeing the poet next to her:

'A chrústa mhallaithe, a chaille 's a mheirdrigh,
is dána tugairse duine i gcruith dhaonna,
in áit ná tigeann aon sciolla dho chré ar bith.
Dá mb'fhiú liom mursantacht cumais do dhéanamh,
do rúscfainn tusa 's do ghiolla mar aon leat.'

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin, *178–82*

'You cursed wretch, you hag and harlot,
it is bold of you to take a man in human form,
to a place where not a scrap of flesh comes at all.
If I thought it worth my while to make an assertion of strength,
I would flay both you and your lackey together.'

As Conán subsequently becomes their guide, however, he identifies the figures around them, including heroes from the *Iliad*, various writers and political leaders, but predominantly literary figures from Irish-language and Latin literature. In addition to the diverse personages of Hector, Anchises, Ovid and Juvenal are Fionn Mac Cumhaill and Deirdre an Bhróin (Deirdre of the Sorrows), among others. Here too, Donncha Rua sees Aeneas in the Underworld (all the while modelling himself on Aeneas!) and Conán, whose role conflates those of Charon and Anchises, and points out Anchises among other luminaries:

An bhfaicir fir ghroí na Traí 's na Gréige,
Hector 's a chlaíomh a' maíomh a thréithe,
an seanduine Anchises a chríon le léithe,
a mhac rena thaoibh 's a shinsear éachtach?
'An gcloisir an glór so ag slóigh na n-éigse,
a' sinim a gceolta is spórt is plé acu,
Horace ann a' mealladh a shuilt Mhecaenas
's, dá ngearradhsan gan lagadh ar bith le géire,
Ovid 'na shuí ar bhinse féir ghlais,
's a nóta scríofa síos chum Caesar,
Juvenal's a phionn idir a mhéara,
is diomblas mar dhubh aige is géirnimh.

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, 211–22*

Do you see the strong men of Troy and Greece,
Hector with his sword declaring his accomplishments,
the old man Anchises who aged with greyness,
his son by his side and his heroic ancestors?
'Do you hear this clamour by the host of poets
playing their music, jesting and discoursing,
Horace there entertaining Maecenas,
and, cutting them sharply and unrelentingly,
Ovid seated on a bank of green grass,
and his note written down to Caesar,
Juvenal, and his pen between his fingers,
and bile as his ink and sharp venom.

The Irish writer Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín (1680–1755), mentioned above, is then revealed to be in their midst, as worthy as any classical predecessor. Clearly, a connection is being asserted between the great Graeco-Roman classical writers and contemporary literature in Irish. Aodh Buí, the eighteenth-century poet, scribe, European soldier and lexicographer from County Clare, is deemed deserving to be in the presence of the ancient, venerated *literati*. Aodh Buí was, of course, also a migrant like Donncha Rua, having moved from Clare to Dublin and later to France, where he joined the O'Brien regiment and resided in Paris (Morley 2011).

Aodh Buí Mac Cuirtín as Éire,
is é 'filíocht go goib-bhinn i nGaeilge,
a bprionsasan go ceansa suilt dá mbréagadh,
is fonn a ghoib go dtabharfadh duine ón éag leis?

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin, *223–6*

Aodh Buí Mac Cuirtín from Ireland,
and him versifying in sweet tones in Irish,
their prince gently and joyfully charming them,
and the tune of his mouth would raise a man from the dead.

Donncha Rua thus places contemporary Gaelic culture on the same footing as Graeco-Roman antiquity, and he affirms the rightful place of Irish as an ancient, learned language with its own traditions. Conán, like Anchises in the *Aeneid*, predicts a glorious future:

'Imthighse abhaile,' ar an faraire tréanmhear,
'a dhuinese thagann mar theachtaire as Éirinn.
Is fada bhiaidh síolrach mhíntais Shéamais
i gceannas 'na rí a' díon bhur ngaolta,
go n-éirí planda seanshliocht Éibhir,
a dhéanfas concas i ngeall ar éigean,
bhainfeas an choróin do Sheoirse an éithigh,
is leanfaidh go fóill do phór Mhilesius.'

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin, *239–46*

'Go home,' said the strong warrior,
'O man who comes as a messenger from Ireland.
The progeny of soft gentle James [i.e., Stuart] will be, for a long time,
in command of the kingship, protecting your relations,
may a shoot of the old progeny of Éibhear [ancestor of the Gaels] arise,
who will make a conquest by means of force,
who will take the crown from George the liar,
and the seed of Milesius [father of Éibhear] will yet continue.

Events in this Irish Hades thus come to a climax within the familiar framework of the native *aisling* tradition of predicting triumph for oppressed Gaelic Catholics, and Conán's final prophecy articulates the desire of a return to power of Charles Stuart (Bonny Prince Charlie, 1720–88), and the imminent return to former glory of the descendants of Milesius (Míl Espáine), the mythical ancestor of the Irish race. Anchises' prophecy on the future of Rome is reframed by Donncha Rua for a contemporary Irish context.

Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin is an acerbic work in places, certainly, but its subversive political aspect must be recognized. Donncha Rua is lamenting the lack of recognition given to Irish poets and to Irish culture in Ireland at the time, asserting the value of his

own work by intertextual engagement with classical literature. As skilfully shown by Ó Laoire (2009), it is interesting that Donncha Rua presents contemporary life in Ireland as being contrary to how he feels it should be, and creates a world in which a man of Gaelic letters such as himself, who is low in status in the real world, can walk among heroes and *literati* in the Underworld. The act of migration, though metaphorically portrayed, becomes a vital step for an educated individual like Donncha Rua. Contrary to the idea of his life of penury serving as the launching pad for an epic journey, Donncha Rua's hardships are, in reality, a consequence of these unsatisfactory political circumstances, as both *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amarán* and his poem of exile, *Bánchnoic Éireann*, show.

Mapping Irish literature and migration through classical models: conclusions

The Irish language and its literature have a fascinating history of migration and preservation. Irish scribes documented events in foreign lands, and Irish-speaking immigrants carried their manuscripts far and wide (see Ó Muircheartaigh, Chapter 9, this volume). However, Irish-language records of the experience of exile, while extant, remain scant. In this discussion, it was the seasonal migration of Irish speakers to Newfoundland that ensured the genesis and preservation of migrant experience in written and spoken Irish. These migrants returned to Ireland and to an Irish-speaking milieu, which facilitated the transmission and perpetuation of the works mentioned above. The remarkable Irish place name for Newfoundland, Talamh an Éisc ('The Fishing Grounds'), reflects the transactional nature of Irish migratory experiences there. Driven by economic necessity to this remote location in the New World, hard-working Irish fishermen could earn a living. Mac Conmara played a central role in the usage of this place name, as his manuscripts proliferated throughout southeast Ireland. He reaffirmed an established term and gave it a literary seal of approval, securing its place in the vernacular for posterity.

In a sense, through *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, Donncha Rua mapped Irish experiences of migration through the lens of Virgil's *Aeneid*, showing us in broad terms how classical tropes could intersect with Irish language and literature. The hero's journey to the other world, the world of the dead, is a standard feature of epic traditions. This journey enables the hero to transcend the limits of the mortal world and access experiences unavailable to ordinary humans. It also provides the hero with a better understanding of how to lead a more restrained existence when he returns to his worldly obligations. As a sea-faring exile, Donncha Rua is like Aeneas, while his return home casts him as an Odysseus conflating Greek and Roman models. *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin* differs from its classical models in its tone and in its lack of an epic ending. Donncha Rua is more of an anti-hero than an epic hero, and the poem does not confer honour or progression on him. Despite his adventures and tribulations, he ultimately finds himself back in Waterford, where his journey began, with no real personal growth

or change. The tragi-comic aspect of this journey is heightened by the realization that an Irish-language poet is not afforded due respect in his homeland, leading to frustration and the creation of a subversive work of the imagination, with the poet himself under the guise of a satirical mask.

Notes

1. All translations from Irish in this chapter are my own.
2. Stanford's broader assessment of Irish-language literature is not unproblematic, however; see Torrance 2024a: 397–8.

PART IV
GENDERED EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER 12
JOHN HOGAN AND THE MALE NUDE IN 1820s ROME

Ciarán Rua O'Neill

Irish artists and migration in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Writing in *The Nation* in 1843, the cultural nationalist Thomas Davis declared that a national art comprising 'great pictures, statues and buildings' had not yet blossomed in Ireland, largely due to the choice of the country's 'great living artists' to live and work abroad or, more specifically, 'on the Tiber and the Thames' (Davis 1843a, 1843b). In highlighting both rivers, Davis alluded to the two key destinations for Irish artists seeking training and patronage in the nineteenth century: London and Rome. Most made their way to the British capital, where several sculptors, notably John Henry Foley (1818–74), enjoyed great success, leading to the perception – enunciated by an anonymous author in the *Illustrated London News* in 1874 – that the 'art of sculpture . . . has been proved to be one for which Irishmen have a decided native genius' (Anon. 1874: 254). Rome, meanwhile, had been a destination for Irish artists since the early eighteenth century, and the most esteemed Irish sculptor residing in the city in Davis' day was undoubtedly John Hogan (1800–58).

While the overseas residence of Irish artists, such as Foley and Hogan, represented an impediment to the development of a 'national art' for Davis, the success that many Irish sculptors achieved in the nineteenth century would not have been possible had they remained in the country of their birth. With limited opportunities for training at home, a period of foreign study was frequently regarded as necessary for artistic development, while residence abroad also allowed artists to broaden their networks of patronage and foster an international reputation, which itself could prove a draw for potential patrons at home. In turn, Irish sculptors living overseas often received commissions for major public projects in Ireland at the expense of those artists who had remained in the country. As Paula Murphy has shown, this is aptly demonstrated by the controversial choice of sculptor for the 'first politically nationalist sculptural work' (2010: 185) in nineteenth-century Dublin, the monument to the famed Irish nationalist leader Daniel O'Connell (1867–82), which still towers imposingly on the city's main thoroughfare, O'Connell Street. The commission went to Irishman Foley, but the fact of his residence abroad, among other issues, contributed to the controversy.

While London-based Foley never submitted a proposal to the O'Connell Monument's competition, his 'breadth of fame' ultimately held sway over the selection committee, who approached him for a design and awarded him the commission, thereby rejecting all submissions from artists resident in Ireland (Murphy 2010: 192). Likewise, while

living in Rome from 1824 to 1849, Hogan's renown in Ireland ensured that he consistently received commissions for private and public works, including statues commemorating some of the major Irish political figures of his day, as demonstrated by his sculpture of O'Connell in Dublin's City Hall (1843–6). The sculptor's acclaim was sustained by visits back to his native country and promoted by Irish journals and newspapers, which lauded his works and abilities while providing alluring insights into his successes in Rome. Articles reported, for example, how Hogan's merits had been 'recognised and honoured' by his 'fellow artists' in the 'City of the Arts', and they recounted how crowds of 'fashionable visitors' could be 'seen daily alighting from the carriages at his door' (Petrie 1840: 196; Anon. 1841: 2).

Alongside prestige and patronage, migration brought Irish artists into contact with wider cultural developments, including the intensified interest in classical antiquity that dominated European art from the second half of the eighteenth century, and which we now call 'neoclassicism'. From its outset, this movement was centred on Rome, where artists from across Europe came to study and work, visit each other's studios and admire the city's wealth of classical antiquities. Prior to Hogan's arrival, the community of international artists in the city included several Irish figures, perhaps most notably James Barry (1741–1806), who, following training in Italy, gained prominence in London with his dramatic paintings on Graeco-Roman themes. Like Barry, the Irish sculptor Christopher Hewetson (*c.* 1737–98) travelled to Rome in the 1760s, where he settled and found success as one of the city's 'most revered' portrait sculptors (Sullivan 2015: 165). Hewetson's portrait busts, as well as his funerary monuments, drew on classical models, and his 1784 memorial to Provost Baldwin in Trinity College Dublin has been recognized as a 'seminal work in the evolution of Neo-Classical sculpture' (McDonnell 2011: 63). By the opening decades of the 1800s then, an intrinsic connection between migration and the cultivation of a successful *and* classically rooted practice was well established among Irish artists.

John Hogan, nationalist sculpture and the male nude

Following his death, John Hogan would come to be viewed as '*par excellence*, the "Irish Sculptor"', whose purported aim, or 'passionate desire', was 'to glorify by his genius the country of his birth', despite spending most of his career abroad (Anon. 1858d: 157; Atkinson 1858: 503). Hogan 'glorified' Ireland by executing a range of monumental works dedicated to nineteenth-century political and religious figures associated with Irish nationalism, as well as sculptural ornamentation for Catholic churches throughout the country. His 'genius', meanwhile, was ostensibly manifested in his transformation of Irish sculptural practice through the introduction of a style, developed in Rome, which was highly classicizing. Indeed, such were the perceived similarities between Hogan's works and ancient sculpture that, although his resolutely Catholic Irish identity was never in doubt, the artist equally appeared to nineteenth-century commentators as an ancient Greek reborn; he was said, for example, to have been 'severely classic' or 'purely

Hellenic' in his outlook, while his sculptures, it was declared, 'might have excited admiration in the clime where the statue halls of the Parthenon disciplined the artistic taste of the Athenians of old' (Atkinson 1858: 570; Anon. 1858b: 488).

For more recent scholars, such as John Turpin (1982: 11), Hogan was 'Ireland's most eminent neoclassical sculptor', whose oeuvre displays the combined influence of both Graeco-Roman sculpture and work produced by artists in Rome from the later eighteenth century, such as the Venetian Antonio Canova (1757–1822), considered the greatest sculptor of his day, and the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844). Turpin's extensive scholarship on Hogan has revealed, for example, how the artist's treatment of religious subjects in a classicizing mode bore the influence of Thorvaldsen while his more naturalistic modelling of the human form appeared to derive from 'the indigenous Italian tradition of Canova' (Turpin 1982: 54–6; see also Turpin 1979). Despite differences in style, both Canova and Thorvaldsen are now categorized as exponents of neoclassicism but, as David Bindman observes, the collective application of 'neoclassical' to the diverse works of an array of international sculptors in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Rome can imply a 'misleading uniformity' (2014: 10).

Significantly, national identity informed the output of artists in the city, influencing stylistic choices and making their individual works 'susceptible [to] different ideological and political inflections' (Fitzgerald 2022: 11), as illustrated by the nineteenth-century reception of Hogan's *Monument to Bishop Doyle* (1837–9, Figure 12.1). While this sculptural group was seen to exhibit a 'classical purity', with a figural composition echoing that of 'the ancient Greek sculptors' (Petrie 1840: 196; Sainthill 1844: 228), it was also understood, in an Irish context, to be 'distinctively national in character' and to have, therefore, 'more than once inspired the voice of patriotism' (Mulvany 1840: 476; Fitzpatrick 1861: 542). Such a characterization of the *Bishop Doyle* monument is unsurprising, considering its amalgamation of classical forms with recognizable symbols of Irish nationalism, in a portrayal of an advocate for Catholic Emancipation. The work, moreover, is typical of Hogan's wider practice as it developed from the 1830s, with its predominant focus on religious and political subjects reflecting the artist's own Catholic and nationalist beliefs, which thereby made him 'representative in visual terms of resurgent post-Union and post-Emancipation Ireland' (Turpin 2016: 84).

This chapter will be concerned with Hogan's earlier sculptures, executed in Rome during the 1820s, a period in which the artist established his distinctive style, as well as his international reputation. It will be argued that Hogan's residence in the Papal city at this time acted as a catalyst for the creation of highly classicizing work that was latent with ideological or political potential relating to Catholic Irish identity, despite incorporating no explicitly Irish symbols or motifs. Specifically, the focus will be on the reclining male nude, a sculptural type to which Hogan paid especial attention in his first five years in the city, as represented by his *Shepherd Boy* (1824–5, Figure 12.2), *Drunken Faun* (1826, Figure 12.3), and *Dead Christ* (1829, Figure 12.4). As Murphy has posited, all three works attest to Hogan's interest in the type as a 'vehicle of expression' (2010: 61) and my intention here is to probe further this expressive potential by examining Hogan's figures in light of the acknowledged 'burden[s] of meaning' (Fitzgerald 2022: 147) with which the classical, and classicizing,

Figure 12.1 John Hogan, *Monument to Bishop Doyle*, 1839, marble. Carlow Cathedral (photo: the author).

(male) body was historically loaded, particularly as it related to idealized nudity's function 'as a conventional sign of ideal political value' (Potts 2000: 233).

In order to unearth the significatory possibilities of Hogan's male nudes, I situate his work in the cosmopolitan 'homosocial' artistic milieu of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Rome. Broadly speaking, homosociality, as employed here, refers to the social bonds between men that sustain and uphold hegemonic masculinity by, for example, fostering distinctions or segregation between male and female spheres. As Abigail Solomon-Godeau has argued, with particular reference to French painting from around 1789 to 1830, the 'intensifying masculinization' encountered in classicizing art during this period provided a visual manifestation of 'networks of relationships between men' that involved 'both power and desire' (1997a: 29; 1997b: 55). In common with this French aesthetic context, homosocial networks structuring contemporary cultural circles in Rome perpetuated a widespread devotion to the classicizing male nude, as

Figure 12.2 John Hogan, *Shepherd Boy*, 1824–5, marble. Powerscourt House, Wicklow (photo: John Hogan Collection, National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL), NCAD, Dublin).

Figure 12.3 John Hogan, *Drunken Faun*, 1826, plaster. Crawford Art Gallery, Cork (photo: the author).

Figure 12.4 John Hogan, *Dead Christ*, 1829, marble. St Teresa's Church, Dublin (photo: the author).

witnessed across artistic production. Evidently, direct encounters with the array of ancient sculptures portraying naked male bodies in Roman museums and collections were also a determining factor, as well as a vibrant literary and scholarly discourse on Graeco-Roman art, and especially the writings of the German scholar Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68), which played a fundamental role in shaping the renewed enthusiasm for classical antiquity across Europe at the time.

By considering Hogan's male nudes in relation to the international artistic circles of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Rome, I aim to establish the conditions for recognizing the undeniable, yet largely unacknowledged, homoerotic character of his early sculptures. Crucially, as I will show, enmeshed with such homoerotic aesthetic impulses was an implicit engagement with the idealized male nude as a politicized body, an aspect of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century classicizing art that has been much elucidated by Solomon-Godeau (1997a, 1997b) and others (e.g., Crow 1995; Potts 1990). Drawing on such scholarship, and through an analysis of Hogan's individual sculptures and their reception up to 1858 – the year of the artist's death – I argue that the male nude in Hogan's oeuvre testifies to the impact of a classicizing artistic tradition, entrenched in Catholic Rome, that valorized the desirable male body and was thus, for the artist, immanent with potential for communicating a cultural and political identity entirely consonant with contemporary Irish discourse on Catholic nationalism.

Encountering the male nude in Cork and Rome, *c*. 1818–25

Hogan was raised in Cork, a city which fostered several major artists who went on to enjoy national and international acclaim in the nineteenth century. Cork's position as a wellspring of artistic talent was the result of an 'imposing cultural superstructure' (Eagleton 1998: 160) that included numerous societies for nurturing artistic developments. Perhaps most significant for fledgling artists in the city, however, was the bestowal in 1818 of an exceptional series of plaster copies of ancient and modern sculptures from the Vatican, created under the supervision of Canova. On public display from its arrival, this collection would have allowed anyone in Cork intent on pursuing an artistic career – such as the young Hogan – to study closely some of the most celebrated sculptural works from Graeco-Roman antiquity. Such works included the *Apollo Belvedere* and *Laocoön and his Sons* (Figure 12.5), both of which represent idealized naked male bodies and had been widely recognized as masterpieces from at least the sixteenth century. In Hogan's day, the study of such canonical sculptures was understood as fundamental to an artistic education, and the development of appropriate aesthetic judgement, as was neatly articulated by the Irish antiquarian George Petrie when he argued that the provision of casts from antique statuary was 'essential to the formation of a correct taste in the higher departments of the Fine Arts' and the pursuit of 'beauty and excellence' (1840: 194).

Figure 12.5a and 5b Casts of the *Apollo Belvedere* and *Laocoön and His Sons*, *c*. 1815, plaster. Crawford Art Gallery, Cork (photo: Crawford Art Gallery).

In the same year as the cast collection's arrival in Cork, the eighteen-year-old Hogan was apprenticed to the architect Thomas Deane, for whom he produced carved ornamentation, a surviving example of which is his *Minerva* of *c*. 1820 (Figure 12.6). This statue once surmounted an insurance building on Cork's South Mall and was thus Hogan's first public sculpture. Its chief importance for us lies in its demonstration of the artist's early engagement with classical statuary. However, rather than drawing on any sculptural precedent – whether in the cast collection or beyond – the *Minerva* seems to

Figure 12.6 John Hogan, *Minerva*, *c*. 1820, pinewood. Crawford Art Gallery, Cork (photo: the author).

have been modelled on printed sources, with its pose and distinct arrangement of carved drapery, as well as its integration of owl and gorgon motifs on the chest and shield, recalling especially depictions of the Roman goddess employed by the Minerva Press in London. According to Petrie, the Cork casts 'kindled a flame' in Hogan's mind and awakened in him a lifelong love of the art of classical antiquity (1840: 194). While clearly classical in subject, the *Minerva* exhibits little of this fiery inspiration, arguably due to the lack of a suitable model for the goddess among the casts. Indeed, it would seem that the impact of the Cork collection would only materialize once Hogan had been immersed in the ancient and modern sculpture of Rome, and this impact would find vivid expression in the male nude.

Hogan received his first commission in 1822. This comprised the creation of twenty-seven figures of saints for St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Cork and was thus, as Turpin notes, 'symbolic of the [Catholic-focused] direction of his future career' (2016: 66). By the following year, Hogan's works also included numerous copies of reliefs and statues from the cast collection, including a replica of at least one of its male nudes, the so-called *Adonis of Centocelle*. These works became known to the Irish art critic William Paulet Carey, who promoted Hogan in the press and among patrons of the arts, leading to sufficient funding being raised to send the sculptor to Rome for study. At the time of his arrival in 1824, a classicizing aesthetic dominated the output of the city's international artists, including Thorvaldsen, acknowledged as the foremost sculptor in Rome following Canova's death in 1822, as well as John Gibson (1790–1866), the leading British sculptor in the city. Several nineteenth-century accounts confirm that Thorvaldsen and Hogan developed a friendship before the former returned to Denmark in 1838, and that Thorvaldsen was an admirer of his Irish peer's work (e.g., Atkinson 1858). We also know, from a letter Hogan wrote to William Crawford (4 December 1824), that he was on friendly terms with Gibson, who provided Hogan with access to his studio until the Irish sculptor acquired his own.[1]

Alongside examining the classically influenced work of such established artists, Hogan's training in Rome comprised the study of various collections of Graeco-Roman sculpture, including those at the Vatican, where he would have encountered the 'original' marble versions of the *Apollo* and *Laocoön* first-hand.[2] The same letter, mentioned above, recounts how Hogan was 'still sketching at the Vatican', some eight months after his arrival in the city, and reveals, as Turpin posited (1982: 46), his full-scale conversion to the 'doctrines of international neoclassicism':

> I must confess a visit to Rome is of many advantages to a sculptor particularly – without even mentioning the readiness & ease of studying the living . . . model, the great benefit and improvement arising from the Society and intercourse of Artists from all parts of Europe and a free access to the Studys [studios] of Canova & Thorwalden [sic] – men who have broken that link or spell which bound the efforts of all since the time of the Greek Sculptors – who have completely reformed the heavy Gothic overcharged style . . . to the beautiful simplicity of the Antique.[3]

Following in the footsteps of Canova and Thorvaldsen, and influenced by earlier encounters with the Cork collection, Hogan's first marble work was an idealized male nude, his *Shepherd Boy* (see Figure 12.2), a figure presumably intended to reflect the 'beautiful simplicity of the Antique' alluded to here. Thorvaldsen had treated this same subject around 1817 and Canova had executed a sleeping shepherd figure, his *Endymion*, between 1819 and 1822 (Figure 12.7), while Gibson had also produced a *Shepherd Boy* in 1818.[4] The choice of this specific subject was, therefore, unsurprising, particularly as 'the open nature of Roman studio practice and training encouraged exchange' which led to 'overlapping reinterpretations' of classical works (Gustin 2023). The city's international artistic milieu also induced a competitive atmosphere, as demonstrated by Gibson's assertion that the large number of 'artists of different nations' in Rome meant 'there is no place where there is so much ambition of who shall produce the finest works' (Gibson quoted in Yarrington 2018). With its illustrious pedigree, the shepherd subject showed that the young Hogan was determined to make his mark in Rome and aspired to be regarded on an equal footing to his international counterparts. According to nineteenth-century reports, Hogan's sculpture was well received by his artist peers in the city who confessed that it was 'very like nature and, modelled with a great deal of spirit, breadth, and force' (Atkinson 1858: 526). Furthermore, the sculpture announced Hogan's distinct fascination with the reclining male nude.

Following the *Shepherd Boy*, Hogan carved a female nude, his *Eve Startled at the Sight of Death* (1825–7, untraced), which had been commissioned by one of his patrons (John

Figure 12.7 Antonio Canova, *Endymion*, 1819–22, marble. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire (photo: Wikimedia Commons).

Fleming Leicester). However, in stark contrast to his fellow sculptors in Rome, whether Thorvaldsen or Gibson, or earlier artists such as Canova – all of whom produced an abundance of naked, or semi-naked, female figures – Hogan executed no further representations of the undraped feminine body. As Turpin posited, it is thus 'reasonable to conclude that Hogan was not interested in female nudes' (1982: 52), which begs the question – why was this the case? For Turpin, the artist's reluctance to engage with the female nude could be attributed to 'moralistic religious reasons' (2016: 72), but other Catholic sculptors in Rome, who also carved religious subjects and were among Hogan's closest friends (Atkinson 1858: 541), such as Pietro Tenerani (1789–1869), executed multiple sculptures of nude or semi-nude female figures. Moreover, Hogan's lack of interest in this type is especially notable in the context of the 1820s, as the very decade in which the female nude began to eclipse its male counterpart in European artistic practice.

As I argue below, Hogan's focus on the male body, from around 1824 to 1829, would appear to reflect the artist's concern with the ideological charge of classically influenced sculpture, a concern that is somewhat at odds with his contemporaries' increasing focus on purely sensual works relinquished of their political or moral implications in their rather formulaic employment of the classical female nude (see, e.g., Gilroy-Ware 2017). Indeed, Hogan was rather exceptional among his sculptor peers in the Papal city, as an Irishman whose work was focused predominantly on ideologically charged Catholic Irish subjects, and whose sentiments regarding the political status of Catholics in his native country can be uncovered in his writings. This is clear, for instance, in his claim that, following Catholic Emancipation, he and his work would be 'free from the Orange [Protestant] yoke' (Atkinson 1858: 534). His prioritization of the masculine body thus attests to an implicit politicization of sculptural work, emerging from an awareness developed in Rome of the underlying correlation between the classical ideal and the visual politics of the desirable male nude.

The male nude as classical ideal

The human body and especially the male nude were a dominant type for carved statues in classical antiquity from at least the fifth and sixth centuries BCE. These presented a highly idealized conception of the masculine body, as evinced, for example, by their accentuated delineation of musculature. By contrast, the soft bodily curves of female figures were hinted at but ultimately hidden beneath sculpted drapery, until the emergence of the female nude in the fourth century BCE. Extensive scholarship, which need not be rehearsed here, has underlined how such an artistic practice reflected a masculine hegemonic order in the ancient world, in which the male nude operated as a 'site of erotic pleasure' (Barrow 2018: 10). In the centuries following antiquity, while the female nude evidently flourished in Western art, the male body nonetheless continued to form the core of classically inspired art theory and training. Despite shifts in perceptions of male same-sex relations, moreover, the idealized male nude persisted as a 'desired body', and one 'invested with an abundance of political, religious and moral meanings' (Uppenkamp 2019: 437).

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the male nude, which had served since the Renaissance 'as the embodiment of universal human values', gained 'a new importance in the art of neoclassicism' (Fend 2011: 17).[5] In tandem with the 'masculinist ethos' of European artistic culture, the classicizing male body was perceived as uniquely suited to 'represent those civic and humanist ideals that celebrated "Man"', while providing 'covert expression' to the culture's underlying 'homosocial (and homoerotic) investments' (Solomon-Godeau 1997a: 195). To aid our understanding of this ideological dynamic, it is worth turning briefly to the writings of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, as they provide a revealing insight into 'both the political and the homoerotic sexual content of the fantasies that gave the antique male nude its larger resonance' from the later eighteenth century (Potts 2000: 4).

In simple terms, Winckelmann called for a return to the ideals of ancient Greek art, as he perceived them, with their focus on the male nude as the apex of beauty. In his 1755 *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and the Art of Sculpture*, for example, he wrote that the 'most beautiful physical nudity' could be encountered in ancient Greek gymnasia where young men exercised naked (2013: 35). Some nine years later, meanwhile, in his renowned *History of the Art of Antiquity*, major passages provided poetic and eroticizing descriptions of ancient sculptures of male nudes, including the *Laocoön* and *Apollo*, the latter of which Winckelmann (2006 (1764): 333) highlighted as 'the highest ideal of art among all the works of antiquity that have escaped its destruction'. The *History*, in particular, had a major impact on European artistic culture following its publication in 1764 and, by the closing decades of the eighteenth century, the work of artists throughout Europe evinced an engagement with the classical ideal as it was articulated by Winckelmann.

Scholarship has shown how the idealized and classicizing male nude attained 'a singular importance' among late eighteenth-century French painters due to a distinctly 'politicised reception' of Winckelmann's work (Fend 2011: 12).[6] In particular, from the early 1780s, political critique in France had drawn on Winckelmannian notions of ancient art to argue that 'a corrupt state . . . produced corrupted bodies' (Crow 1995: 27) and, during the French Revolution of 1789–99, artists reconnected 'with Winckelmann's attempt to represent the beauty of the Greek ideal as the *embodiment of political freedom*' (Potts 2000: 223, emphasis added). Indeed, for Winckelmann, freedom was the chief reason for Greek art's superiority (2006 (1764): 187), and although the conceptualization of 'freedom' in Winckelmann's writings reveals a complex set of meanings – whether relating to social and political contexts or subjective experience – it is nonetheless clear that the author perceived that a certain *political* freedom in ancient Greece allowed great art to flourish, and that this freedom could be epitomized by the idealized, and desirable, male nude.

As scholars have shown, the 'intimate' connection that emerged in revolutionary French art between a 'purified classical aesthetic', focused on the male body, and the 'politics of liberty' (Potts 2000: 225) found powerful expression in the oeuvre of one of the most renowned painters of the age, Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825). Significantly, David's politicized employment of the male nude was rooted in his training from 1775

in Rome, a city in which the writings of Winckelmann were 'practically inescapable' and his *History*, in particular, enjoyed 'canonical status' (Crow 1995: 57). Clearly then, the focus on the male body in the city's artistic circles could not be completely divorced from its political or homoerotic dimensions. Such a Winckelmannian approach, however, can be considered independently of the sexual interests of individual artists – on which it is not my intention to speculate here – as it instead reflects a homosocial milieu that was 'steeped in the study of male bodies in primarily all-male environments', and in which the 'cult of male beauty' was 'a central, unanimously upheld tenet' (Solomon-Godeau 1997a: 92–3). In a sculptural context, this aesthetic fixation was manifested in a work often hailed as the 'first neoclassical sculpture' (Fitzgerald 2022: 130), Canova's *Theseus and the Minotaur* (1781–2, Figure 12.8). This group was executed soon after the Venetian

Figure 12.8 Antonio Canova, *Theseus and the Minotaur*, 1781–82, marble. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (photo: the author).

artist's arrival in the Papal city and, by representing the mythological hero as a highly idealized, muscular nude, who sits in pensive repose upon the collapsed body of his adversary, it visually expressed Winckelmann's conceptions of male beauty and the Greek artistic ideal, as it was famously articulated by the German writer, with the display of a 'noble simplicity' and 'quiet grandeur' as its essence (Potts 2000: 1).

Through its idealized rendering of naked male bodies and their compositional intimacy, the *Theseus* group held an 'unavoidable aesthetic and even erotic appeal' (Bindman 2014: 34) for late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century viewers, alongside a concomitant potential to represent certain ideological notions. Evidently, in a broad sense, it could be seen to signify the 'triumph of the human over the bestial' (Fitzgerald 2022: 135), while it has been posited that, for Canova, the work represented an aesthetic 'victory', that of idealism over naturalism (Honour 1977: 39). As with the employment of the male nude in French painting, during the early nineteenth century at least, such sculptural works also had the potential to convey political or patriotic values for viewers. In 1821, for example, the Italian scholar Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi claimed that the work symbolized the triumph of 'la Patria' over its foes, presumably here referring to the victory of Venice, Canova's homeland, over the Ottoman Empire (Albrizzi 1821: 62; see also Johns 1998b: 53, 196).

Perceptions of the idealized male nude's capacity to embody political ideals among an early nineteenth-century audience are also revealed by viewer responses to Thorvaldsen's 'breakthrough' sculpture in Rome, a work likewise focused on the nude representation of a classical hero, his *Jason* of 1802–3 (Figure 12.9). This statue evidently drew on the *Apollo Belvedere*, then widely seen as the epitome of the Greek artistic ideal, and surviving commentary by contemporary Northern European viewers hints at their understanding of Thorvaldsen's flawless male nude, despite its highly classicizing form and depiction of a Greek hero, as a symbol of 'the hope of a new German spirit' (Bindman 2014: 44). More specifically, nineteenth-century writers' perceptions of the political symbolism of the work were articulated in distinctly patriotic tones, as evinced by the Danish scholar Just Mathias Thiele's declaration that the sculpture illustrated how Thorvaldsen, 'like the Argonauts' before him, had come to 'a foreign land to take possession of [its] most precious asset' by making 'his own the language of the classical tradition that widespread prejudice held to be precluded from those of Nordic descent' (Grandesso 2015: 23).

A 'stout Sabine lad': Hogan's *Shepherd Boy* (1824–25)

In this context, it becomes clear that Hogan's *Shepherd Boy* (Figure 12.2) could only have emerged from the cosmopolitan, homosocial culture of artistic Rome. For its subject, as we have seen, Hogan was evidently inspired by the *Shepherd Boy* sculptures executed by Thorvaldsen and Gibson. The appeal of the shepherd subject resulted from its long-held artistic associations with pastoral Arcadia or mythological shepherds, such as Endymion, while it could also carry Christian connotations, reflecting Jesus as the 'good shepherd' or the biblical shepherds to whom the birth of Jesus was announced. It is, in fact, likely that

Figure 12.9 Bertel Thorvaldsen, *Jason with the Golden Fleece*, 1803–28, marble. Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen, A52 (photo: Jakob Faurvig © Thorvaldsens Museum).

the pose of Hogan's sculpture drew inspiration from a religious work by Thorvaldsen, his *Reclining Shepherd* of 1821–2 (Figure 12.10). This figure formed part of the Danish artist's design for a pedimental group representing *John the Baptist Preaching* at Vor Frue Kirke (Copenhagen Cathedral), a composition which presents a Christian narrative but does so in a classicizing 'Arcadian and pastoral' register (Grandesso 2015: 186).

Hogan's *Shepherd Boy* mirrors Thorvaldsen's figure in its recumbent posture, with a similar positioning of limbs and opposing twist of the head. Unlike his Danish peer's

Figure 12.10 Bertel Thorvaldsen, *Reclining Shepherd*, 1821–2, plaster. Copenhagen, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen, A70 (photo: Jakob Faurvig © Thorvaldsens Museum).

Shepherd, however, Hogan's sculpture is completely nude except for the folds of drapery carved between the legs. While intended to conceal the genitalia, the carved lines of these folds nonetheless draw attention to the pubic area, and thereby evoke a latent eroticism lacking in the Thorvaldsen work. The *Shepherd Boy*'s sensual character is further emphasized by the position of the figure's right arm, whose outstretched form draws the viewer's eye to the area between the legs. In its rendering of contrastingly tense and relaxed musculature and flesh, as well as its more naturalistic modelling, Hogan's figure also departs from Thorvaldsen's *Shepherd* as it evokes the soft texture of skin and thereby accentuates its youthful character. Accordingly, its tone recalls Canova's classicizing male nudes, which present similarly seductive and languorous poses, arrangements of drapery and a comparable treatment of the marble flesh, as epitomized by his *Endymion* (Figure 12.7), as well as the earlier *Genius of Death* integrated into the 1787–92 *Monument to Pope Clement XIII Rezzonico* in St Peter's in Rome (Figure 12.11).

Akin to such sculptures by the Venetian artist, Hogan's *Shepherd Boy* exhibits a 'boyish gracefulness' and a 'supposedly "innocent" homoeroticism', characteristics that associate it with Winckelmann's 'Beautiful' style (Potts 2000: 91). According to Winckelmann, the highest forms of ancient art could be categorized in two historical phases, which were intrinsically wed to political circumstances, only emerging once 'full enlightenment and freedom appeared in Greece' (Winckelmann 2006 (1764): 232). For Winckelmann, the earlier 'High' style was the grander or more elevated of the two and could be encountered on the more austere work of fifth-century BCE sculptors, while the more

Figure 12.11 Antonio Canova, *Monument to Pope Clement XIII Rezzonico* (detail), 1787–92, marble. St Peter's Basilica, Vatican, Rome (photo: © Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images).

graceful 'Beautiful' style began with the fourth-century BCE sculptor Praxiteles and sought to 'accompany high beauty with a sensuous charm' (2006 (1764): 236). In Hogan's day, the 'Beautiful' style was associated with surviving ancient sculptures in Rome, whose forms were attributed to Praxiteles and displayed lithe, adolescent bodies, such as the copy of the ancient Greek sculptor's *Resting Satyr* in the Capitoline Museum (Figure 12.12), a work which, according to Winckelmann, was 'much-praised' and celebrated throughout the 'whole world' (2006 (1764): 311).

Hogan's *Shepherd Boy* reflects the broad enthusiasm for 'Beautiful', ephebic male bodies in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Roman artistic circles, as

Figure 12.12 *Resting Satyr*, *c.* 117–38 CE copy of fourth-century BCE original, marble. Musei Capitolini, Rome (photo: the author).

witnessed in the work of Canova, as well as Thorvaldsen, Gibson and Tenerani (see Figure 12.18). Due to 'the Winckelmannian elevation of the ephebic youth to the apogee of ideal beauty', as Solomon-Godeau has shown, the type was also the 'dominant visual emblem' for the masculine ideal in French paintings during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary years (Solomon-Godeau 1997a: 102–3). Significantly, such French renderings of the 'Beautiful' male body emerged from the 'cultural crucible of Rome' and drew directly on 'ephebic prototypes' provided by Rome-based sculptors, including Canova and Thorvaldsen (Solomon-Godeau 1997b: 56; 1997a: 147). It was in Rome, moreover, that French artists became familiar with the 'ephebe's aesthetic/political potentialities', which allowed for 'erotic identification and projection' and an associated capacity for symbolizing 'the male values and virtue of a regenerated Republic' (Solomon-Godeau 1997a: 147; 1997b: 60).

Evidently, where the male nude was thus privileged with signifying political freedoms or possibilities, whether in late eighteenth or early nineteenth-century Rome or France, such significations were not extended to female nudes. Consequentially, the female nude, 'as a marginalized erotic' figure in European artistic practice at the time, was 'denied the ethical and political investment given to the male body' (Potts 2000: 229). I would argue that it was for this very reason that Hogan showed little interest in the type, with his almost exclusive focus on the ideologically charged male nude in the 1820s pre-empting his later engagement with more explicitly political sculpture focused on nationalist and Catholic themes. However, while we can assuredly locate Hogan's *Shepherd Boy* within a Roman, and wider European, artistic interest in the ephebic nude, the work's political connotations remain elusive.

Hogan could have become familiar with Winckelmannian ideas of art from fellow sculptors such as Gibson, and we can presume that Hogan employed the 'Beautiful' style when modelling his *Shepherd Boy*, as well as his *Drunken Faun* and *Dead Christ*, as it allowed, for Winckelmann, a 'greater diversity of expression' (2006 (1764): 236) and was in turn most suitable for conveying emotional depth. Hogan's sculpture also drew on a Roman tradition of designing classicizing nude or semi-naked male bodies for religious contexts, following the models of Thorvaldsen's distinctly Christian *Shepherd* or Canova's *Genius of Death*, the latter of which provided 'an eloquent manifestation of neoclassicism's syncretism' through its integration of classical and Christian motifs (Johns 1998a: 67, 68), in a composition with notably patriotic political symbolism. It is thus feasible that Hogan's Arcadian *Shepherd Boy* had certain Christian inflections for its viewers, and a perception of the sculpture as representing an Italian, and therefore Catholic, shepherd, specifically, is supported by Hogan's comment that it was modelled on a 'stout Sabine lad' (Atkinson 1858: 525; see also Anon. 1858c: 175). It is, furthermore, not unremarkable that, in a letter dated to 1824, Hogan appeared to equate Irish and Italian Catholics by writing of the comparable and positive treatment such 'a country rascal from the Sabine or *Kerry* mountains' (Atkinson 1858: 524) would receive in certain Roman environments, a statement that betrays his sentiments regarding the patently lesser status of Catholics in his native country. Nonetheless, a relationship between the *Shepherd Boy* and the politics of Irish Catholic identity cannot be securely established, and we must look

instead to Hogan's successor male nudes for a more conspicuous demonstration of this connection, whether via an analysis of the individual sculptures themselves or by studying the perspectives of nineteenth-century viewers.

A 'work of a much higher kind': the *Drunken Faun* (1826)

Hogan's *Drunken Faun* (see Figure 12.3) again attests to the prevailing interest in homoerotic ephebic bodies in Roman sculptural practice during the early 1800s. This work was Hogan's first widely acclaimed sculpture, and nineteenth-century descriptions of the artist's life in the city were fond of repeating one particular anecdote, which accounted for its creation: it was said that during a gathering of international artists, the Italian painter Vincenzo Camuccini claimed that all poses in classical sculpture had already been conceived, and no truly new poses were possible, following which Gibson challenged Hogan to prove the contrary. This challenge led to the creation of the *Drunken Faun*, which was immediately lauded as a strikingly innovative interpretation of the antique; according to Atkinson, 'all the artists of Rome' came to view Hogan's *Faun* and admitted it 'to be original and perfect', while multiple nineteenth-century accounts claimed that Thorvaldsen declared the work a 'miracle of art' and 'worthy of an Athenian studio' (Atkinson 1858: 531; Petrie 1840: 195; Anon. 1858c: 175).

Crucially, as evinced by multiple commentators, the sculpture met the contemporary requirement to devise works that drew on ancient models but were nonetheless innovative, a characteristic of the *Drunken Faun* observed by Petrie when he claimed that it displayed 'all the beauty and truth of the antique sculpture, combined with the most perfect originality' (1840: 195). Never carved in marble, the plaster figure provides an innovative and dynamic variation of an ancient prototype, exemplified most famously by the *Barberini Faun* (Figure 12.13). One reason for interest in the faun subject among contemporary sculptors was its perceived suitability for exhibiting technical proficiency in the modelling of the human body; as 'ancient sculptors represented [fauns] in almost every possible attitude', modern sculptors were in a position to 'exhibit, with fantastic license, all the grace or power of the human form in the representation of these beings, even in attitudes inconsistent with the proper dignity of man' (Sproule 1854: 424). Adhering to this view, Hogan's sculpture seemed intended, above all, as a formal exercise to live up to Gibson's challenge and to exhibit the artist's prowess in the modelling of the male nude in complex poses. This is underlined by a survey of the sculpture's reception during Hogan's lifetime, which confirms that it was admired primarily for its display of technical proficiency. Equally, however, its potential for a politicized national symbolism among an Irish audience is supported in some textual sources.

One particularly idiosyncratic, but potentially revealing, Irish interpretation of the *Drunken Faun* was offered in 1852 by an anonymous writer in the *Dublin University Magazine*, who saw the plaster figure when it was shown at the Irish Industrial Exhibition in Cork that same year. In this account, the writer dreams of a nocturnal visit to the Exhibition, in which the sculpture comes to life and begins to speak, declaiming 'Oh,

Figure 12.13 *Barberini Faun*, third–second century BCE, marble. Glyptothek, Munich (photo: the author).

Bacchus!', before making allusions to various classical gods and mythological figures. A tonal shift, however, swiftly follows during which the *Drunken Faun*'s speech attains a more distinctly Irish vernacular and becomes focused on the consumption of alcohol: he talks of receiving an education in 'whiskey-drinking' from Hogan and asks 'what's to be done for a drink? Oh! if I had some of that same Irish stuff of Hogan's.' He then staggers off in search of a 'bottle of the native' and is encountered later in the text singing verses 'taken at random from various ancient and modern bacchanalian songs – Irish lyrics being predominant' (Anon. 1852a: 470, 471, 475).

Although providing an intentionally comic, and rather absurd, description of an individual writer's imaginary visit to the 1852 Exhibition, this account nonetheless emphasizes a perception of their being something inherently Irish about this portrayal of an 'unmistakeable Faun of ancient Greece' (Sproule 1854: 425). It is notable that in the same narrative, other sculptures by Irish artists at the Exhibition also awaken from their

slumber in plaster or marble but are not given any Irish inflections, stereotypical or otherwise. This includes several female figures by Irish artists, such as Patrick McDowell's *Pysche* (1850) and *Eve* (1850), who are instead endowed with a universal 'radiance', 'divine serenity' and 'dazzling loveliness' (Anon. 1852a: 471). This distinction is not simply a gendered one either, as Foley's statue of a male *Youth at a Stream* (1844) is also deemed a rather generic 'beautiful creature . . . nearly equal to Apollo [Belvedere]' (Anon. 1852a: 472, 473).

The description of Hogan's *Drunken Faun* diverges from such laudatory declamations, in spite of its highly idealized visual form, an aspect of the work that was foregrounded by several nineteenth-century artists and connoisseurs. Indeed, while it ostensibly portrays a faun in a state of intoxication, the sculpture was nonetheless seen as having avoided the negative connotations inherent to such a subject by presenting a 'work of a much higher kind than . . . similar subjects as treated by the moderns' (Sproule 1854: 425; see also Carleton 1896: 272). The Irish writer John Sproule could here have been referring to the well-known *Drunken Faun* modelled by the Swedish artist Johan Tobias Sergel in Rome in 1770 (Figure 12.14), a work which exposes a 'moral irreverence' in its exposed nudity and slumped, sideways posture as it 'glares up in a not altogether innocent invitation' (Macsotay 2018: 117–18). Unlike Hogan's work, the frontally exposed posture of Sergel's figure more patently mirrors examples of fauns from classical antiquity with

Figure 12.14 Johan Tobias Sergel, *The Faun, Reclining on a Goat Skin and a Sack of Wine*, 1770, terracotta. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (photo: the author).

explicit connotations of sexuality and intoxication, such as the *Barberini Faun*, a work judged as beautiful but 'no ideal' by Winckelmann (2006 (1764): 200), or the well-known drunken faun unearthed in Herculaneum in 1754.

With his *Faun*, Hogan undeniably modelled a desirable naked male body in a suggestive pose, but he attempted to ensure the figure's modesty by the discrete placement of the goat skin across the genitalia, which is only suggestively rather than forcibly directed towards the gaze of the viewer, as it is in Sergel's sculpture and the *Barberini* figure. Concurrently, Hogan's work presents an ephebic body that departs from the more masculinized or mature muscular forms of the Sergel and ancient examples, while his *Faun*'s head (Figure 12.15) lacks their more 'unruly' aspects, such as facial hair, disorderly locks and rather jocular or lewd expressions. Also absent are the typical 'bestial' features of faun sculptures, such as prominent pointed ears, a trait encountered, for example, on the *Resting Satyr* (see Figure 12.12), as well as the famed *Clapping Faun* which Hogan would have seen when travelling through Florence en route to Rome and in the Cork collection of casts.

In contrast to such ancient and modern examples, Hogan's *Drunken Faun* displays the smooth, unblemished face of a beautiful youth and thereby recalls the bust of a faun illustrated in Winckelmann's *Unpublished Antique Monuments* (*Monumenti antichi inedita*) of 1767, a work which the German writer claimed 'surpasses any beauty that I

Figure 12.15 John Hogan, *Drunken Faun* (detail), 1826, plaster. Crawford Art Gallery, Cork (photo: the author).

have been able to observe until now' (Winckelmann quoted in Potts 2000: 215; Figure 12.16). Likewise, Hogan's faun exhibits idealized facial features, with the classicizing plumb nose and rounded chin, as well as a half-open, 'somewhat languid and amorous' mouth (Winckelmann 1776: 73). The *Drunken Faun* thus aspires to Winckelmann's articulation of the 'finest statues' of this type, as a representation of the 'male ideal' in the form of a desirable 'image of ripe, beautiful, perfectly proportioned youth' (2006 (1764): 200), with almost no indications of its semi-bestial nature. Indeed, the only evidence that Hogan's figure depicts a faun at all, rather than a human youth, is provided by the innocuous tuft of hair just visible on the lower back.

Figure 12.16 Detail from Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Monumenti Antichi Inediti* I, 1767 (Rome). From the British Library Collection: G.3343-4, pl. 59 (photo: the author).

Presumably, as a consequence of such 'Winckelmannian' characteristics, for several Catholic and nationalist Irish critics Hogan's *Drunken Faun* manifested the artist's 'genius' and seemed to rise to the challenge of representing apparent excess, while simultaneously displaying an unrivalled 'grace' (Maguire 1853: 339; Anon. 1858b: 488; see also Anon. 1872: 837). Certain British or Protestant writers, however, saw little of these graceful aspects, declaring, on the contrary, that the sculpture's attitude was 'rather violent and ungraceful' (Beard, Mayall et al. 1852: 244). Beyond the *Drunken Faun*'s ostensible subject matter, Hogan's identity as a Catholic Irishman residing in Papal Rome may well be assumed to have underlain such (stereotypical) disdain.

Unlike Hogan's *Faun*, the works celebrated for their universal beauty in the *Dublin University Magazine* article were carved by sculptors, mostly Protestant, then living in London. While this article was republished in numerous Irish newspapers, including certain nationalist titles, the *Magazine* was ultimately 'allied to the conservative politics of the Protestant ascendancy' (Hall 2000: 34). More generally, it established an anti-Roman Catholic editorial tone from the outset, describing Irish Catholics, for example, as suffering from their allegiance to Rome and thraldom to the Pope, who was seen as a 'spirit of darkness permanently enthroned at the Vatican' (Anon. 1842: 743). It also made a direct connection between the 1852 Exhibition and Protestant religion, by celebrating Ireland's nineteenth-century national exhibitions 'as monuments to technology and progress, a token that God's hand was manifest in the world' (Hall 2000: 176). The exhibitions were intended to increase the country's economic prosperity through the promotion of industry, a goal perceived as intrinsically allied to the ideals of the Protestant Irish, with 'virtue, worldly prosperity and Protestantism' going hand in hand, as opposed to the 'ignorance, vice, [and] misery' of Roman Catholicism (Anon. 1852c: 374, 376), arguably here embodied in the character of the *Drunken Faun*. A dichotomy thus emerges along political–religious Irish lines: for some members of the Protestant establishment, Hogan's *Drunken Faun* could be seen as an instance of Catholic Irish degeneracy, while the same sculpture exhibits an unparalleled 'grace' for certain Catholic or nationalist writers.

A significant model for Hogan's *Drunken Faun*, similarly said to be imbued with grace, is Michelangelo's famous *Bacchus* of 1496–7 (Figure 12.17). The first sculpture the Renaissance artist executed in Rome, like Hogan's *Faun* centuries later, this figure confronted Michelangelo with the challenge of creating a work that 'while convincingly classical, would be equally original', with a novel pose that had no precedent in classical statuary (Koch 2006: 348). Contemporary commentary on Hogan's *Drunken Faun* implicitly associated it with the Renaissance *Bacchus*, stating, for example, that its unique pose exhibited those same aspects of sculptural composition 'in which the genius of Buonarotti [i.e. Michaelangelo] took such intense delight' (Anon. 1852b: 2). Michelangelo chose to depict his *Bacchus* as a somewhat intoxicated, but nonetheless graceful and softly curved, 'Beautiful' figure, standing in a distinctive unstable posture, as Hogan would likewise attempt with his *Faun*. Fauns, moreover, were intimately associated with Bacchus, and Michelangelo's sculpture itself incorporates a smaller figure representing a

Figure 12.17 Michelangelo, *Bacchus*, 1496–7, marble. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence (photo: Wikimedia Commons).

satyr depicted with typical attributes, such as pointed ears and horns. Supporting evidence for Hogan's use of the *Bacchus* as a source is also provided by elements from Michelangelo's figure that are repeated on the *Drunken Faun*, including the drinking vessel held aloft in the right hand and the vine leaves entwined in the hair. Furthermore, its incorporation of a flayed goat skin, with one hoof hanging suggestively between the figure's legs, recalls the cloved feet of the satyr on the Renaissance work.

In 1801, the well-known British artist Henry Fuseli had argued that Michelangelo's *Bacchus* represented 'the personification of youthful inebriety, but it is the inebriety of a superior being, not yet forsaken by grace' (Wornum 1848: 541). As Linda Koch and others have shown, such 'superior' aspects of Michelangelo's figure, which could be identified with 'grace', reflect the perspectives of fifteenth-century Platonists, in which

'the drunkenness of Bacchus, associated with excess and the lower world of the senses' was 'paradoxically, also the stimulus to the higher world of knowledge' that could aid 'man's ascent towards God' (Koch 2006: 354, 355). As Koch argues, these aspects of the work become apparent through scrutiny of the sculpture's innovative pose, as it reveals that Michelangelo considered viewer participation necessary to show how the 'drunken god is thrown off-balance, as if in a transformative state between the lower and higher worlds', allowing it to appear as 'simultaneously an image of sensual indulgence and the key to [a] rational understanding' of 'Christianized moral truths' (Koch 2006: 355, 365).

Sproule argued in 1854 that, in its pose, Hogan's *Drunken Faun* 'requires to be studied, if it is to be properly understood, – to be examined on every side, and with the utmost care, too, before its merits (in an intellectual point of view) can be gathered' (Sproule 1854: 424). Sproule thus enunciated sentiments similar to Koch who, writing over 150 years later, insists on the necessity of viewer participation to 'complete the meaning' of Michelangelo's *Bacchus* and 'give the work fuller significance' (Koch 2006: 346). Such a close examination of Hogan's sculpture exposes a striking contrast between the powerless lower body and the figure's upper limbs, particularly the left arm, which is held firm and taut as it strains to hold the torso upright. Unlike the indolent *Barberini* and Sergel fauns, which collapse listlessly into the animal skins upon which they lie, Hogan's figure strives to raise itself upwards, away from the more sensual elements associated with fauns, such as the goat skin, but also the pipes, wine jar and cymbals, while the gaze of its youthful face is also directed upwards, arguably, in this case, towards a higher ideal. Indeed, the figure's pose bears a strong resemblance to that of an enraptured St John as he gazes heavenwards towards Jesus in Hogan's later *Transfiguration* (1849), as well as Graeco-Roman, and more recent, models of heroic nudity. Such models include the renowned ancient sculpture known as the *Dying Gaul*, as well as Jean-Germain Drouais' *Dying Athlete*, which was itself inspired by the *Gaul* and painted in Rome in 1785. Akin to Hogan's *Faun*, both works employ a supporting right hand that registers 'an inner determination to hold the body upright', reflecting a refusal to 'collapse into unconsciousness' (Crow 1995: 55). The composition of the *Faun*'s head, moreover, as it turns slightly to the left, is not unlike that of Hogan's explicitly Catholic *Dead Christ* (Figure 12.4), and it is worth noting that this head was the focus of an 1894 description of the sculpture in the *New Catholic World*, which drew attention to its exceptional beauty, claiming that anyone who saw it, 'must confess that [Hogan] was an artist of rare power' (Anon. 1894: 290).

Understood in this context, Hogan's *Drunken Faun* can be interpreted as an evolution of the *Shepherd Boy*, which earlier exhibited the same 'Beautiful' characteristics Winckelmann associated with fauns. The *Shepherd Boy* may itself have been inspired by a faun figure executed by another Catholic artist based in Rome in Hogan's day, Tenerari's 1823 *Faun with a Tibia* (Figure 12.18), which similarly demonstrates Winckelmannian attributes but reveals its true nature through a subtle tail and pointed ears. Akin to Tenerani's *Faun*, for example, Hogan's *Shepherd Boy* bears a pipe, a notable divergence from the norm of accompanying shepherd figures with a crook, as in Thorvaldsen's and Gibson's statues. Hogan's first original male nude, however, appears predominantly

Figure 12.18 Pietro Tenerani, *Faun with a Tibia*, 1859 (based on 1823 original), marble. Palazzo Villa Tasca, Palermo (photo: Ghigo Roli/Photo12).

focused on the purely sensual aspects of the ephebe while the *Drunken Faun* complicates those sensual aspects by rendering them in a more elaborate composition. For Winckelmann, ancient works in the 'Beautiful' style brought together two forms of grace: a higher kind, which, like 'heavenly Venus', reflected an 'elevated state', and a more 'more lovely and pleasing' or sensual kind (2006 (1764): 235, 236). While the *Shepherd Boy* appears firmly to represent the latter form of grace, Hogan's *Faun* emerges as an idealized ephebe that reconciles its qualities of sensuality and desirability with a pose communicating its elevated form, which, in this particular case, we may relate to Christianity. Indeed, in his 1759 essay 'On Grace in Works of Art', Winckelmann implied that spiritual qualities were an inherent aspect of artistic 'grace' as it was a 'gift from heaven' (Winckelmann 2013: 137). If Winckelmannian notions of freedom associated

with the 'Beautiful' male nude are borne in mind, it becomes apparent that Hogan's graceful *Drunken Faun*, modelled in tandem with the contemporary and increasingly aggressive political agitating of Daniel O'Connell and the Catholic Association in Ireland for Catholic Emancipation, could thus act as a symbol for the anticipated 'elevation' of the status of the Catholic Irish, while simultaneously being perceived as representing Catholic degeneracy from a British or Protestant establishment perspective.

The 'soul that breathes through the marble'[7]: the *Dead Christ* (1829)

The reclining male nude as a subject for Hogan reached its apogee early in his career, with his *Dead Christ* (see Figure 12.4) of 1829, completed the same year as Catholic Emancipation. This figure represented a further development in Hogan's exploration of the male nude's capacity to display Winckelmannian grace, as it provided the purest embodiment yet of the higher kind in its display of the 'blissful stillness of divine nature' (Winckelmann 2006 (1764): 236). Following the oblique symbolism of its sculptural predecessors, moreover, the *Dead Christ* provided a clear and emphatic embodiment of the political status of Irish Catholicism, as has been acknowledged by scholars. Reflecting on Hogan's multiple sculptures of *pietà*s and his three iterations of the *Dead Christ*,[8] for example, Tom Dunne has argued that Hogan's work 'clearly echoed O'Connellite rhetoric about Irish Catholic suffering' (2002: 286).

In her biography of Hogan, Atkinson argued that Rome was the ideal city in which to practise as an Irish Catholic artist, as in the Papal city 'he would never feel the shame of banishment, the chill of exile', for going 'to Rome is to the Catholic like drawing near to the bosom of his mother' (Atkinson 1858: 571–2). In Rome, Hogan would have witnessed a unique intermingling of classical and Christian art that dated back centuries. He would have seen how the religion he shared with fellow Italian artists, such as Tenerari, could find expression in contemporary sculptural works. A shared Catholic identity may also have contributed to the highly positive reception of his works in Rome, which led to Hogan's election to the Roman academy for artists known as the Virtuosi del Pantheon, an honour none of his British peers in the city enjoyed. Such a relationship with Rome contrasted with that of non-Catholic artists from Northern Europe, with Hogan claiming that the British artists in the city, for example, were 'generally sneering and talking of the absurdity of the Catholic religion, misgovernment of Catholic countries, and so on' (Atkinson 1858: 523). Even Winckelmann, who initially felt himself free in Rome eventually expressed a perception of the Papal city as a 'foreign "Catholic" world' (Potts 2000: 199).

While Hogan created multiple works that combined a classicizing style with explicitly Christian themes during his years in Rome, his *Dead Christ* was the earliest to do so and it remained the most celebrated throughout the nineteenth century. Upon its completion, the sculpture was 'universally admired' (Coleman 1895: 212) and declared a masterpiece by Thorvaldsen while, according to Atkinson, Hogan's Italian peers were so impressed with the work that they claimed the Irish artist had surpassed all English sculptors

(Atkinson 1858: 527). Hogan's hope for the sculpture was that it would be purchased by the Catholic Church in Ireland and with this intention in mind, in 1829, he undertook his first return journey home accompanied by the marble sculpture. It was exhibited in Dublin, along with the plaster *Drunken Faun*, and, while the latter work received no commissions to be carved in marble, the *Dead Christ* was purchased by the Carmelite Community who placed it beneath the high altar in St Teresa's Church on Clarendon Street in Dublin, where it remains to this day.

Prior to commencing work on his *Dead Christ*, Hogan could have viewed countless earlier carvings of the collapsed body of Christ as sources of inspiration, such as Giuseppe Sanmartino's striking *Veiled Christ* (1753), and, perhaps most famously, the figure of Christ in Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1498–9). As Turpin has argued, such works drew on a tradition in Italy 'of religious art based on the idealized human body as a vehicle for the transmission of emotion' (1979: 64), and Canova is perhaps the most famous artist who continued this tradition into the early nineteenth century, as evinced by his *Pietà*. The classicizing figure of a deceased Christ in Canova's group provides an obvious precedent for Hogan's sculpture, but, in its isolated status and distinct supine pose, the Irish artist's *Dead Christ* reveals a stronger resemblance to the Venetian's *Recumbent Magdalene* (1819–22), a work rediscovered in recent years (Figure 12.19).[9] The composition of Hogan's sculpture mirrors Canova's figure, with a similar disposition of limbs, while the heads of both figures rest on rock forms and are tilted towards the viewer. Notably, however, the Magdalene's body appears unblemished whereas Christ's wounds are on show and, in place of the single tear of the Magdalene, blood flows from the wound on the torso of Hogan's Christ sculpture, an attribute clearly intended to emphasize its emotional appeal.

While the recumbent pose of Hogan's figure clearly draws on the reclining figures of Canova, as Turpin highlighted, the sculpture also bears the inspiration of Thorvaldsen's *Christus* (plaster 1821–2; marble 1827–33, Figure 12.20), a work similarly deemed a masterpiece in its day (Turpin 1982: 56). Both depictions of Christ share certain formal

Figure 12.19 Antonio Canova, *Recumbent Magdalene*, 1819–22, marble. Private collection (photo: © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images).

Figure 12.20 Bertel Thorvaldsen, *Christus*, 1827–33, marble. Vor Frue Kirke, Copenhagen (photo: the author).

correspondences, such as the deeply cut carving of the face, hair and beard, but a comparison of the Irish and Danish artists' treatment of the body of Christ reveals clear divergences. Thorvaldsen's statue, depicting the resurrected Christ for a Lutheran context, wears voluminous classical drapery and places little emphasis on Christ's wounds. The Danish sculptor, moreover, chose to depict his Christ as a powerful, heroic figure, whose muscular body is carved with rather firm contours and who stands in a calm, triumphant pose. Thorvaldsen's *Christus* can thereby be aligned with Winckelmann's 'High' style and thus provides a strong contrast with the exposed, ephebic and collapsed body of Hogan's *Christ*. Ultimately, Thorvaldsen's statue presents a rather impassive figure while Hogan's

work, in line with the more 'Beautiful' bodies of his earlier figures, was evidently intended to invoke strong emotions in its viewers, as the sculptor implied when he admitted that, although it was his own composition, he had been deeply affected by it (Hogan quoted in Casanova 2004: 52). Multiple nineteenth-century accounts also attest to Hogan praying to a later version of the sculpture (Anon. 1858c: 175; Mulholland 1889: 485; Coleman 1895: 217), while an anonymous correspondent from Rome stated, in relation to the *Dead Christ*, that 'we admire the expression of resignation, the calm sleep of death, the laxity of the limbs and muscles, which are conceived with great feeling, and portrayed with striking truth' (Anon. 1829: 649). As with Hogan's *Drunken Faun*, certain British viewers provided an opposing perspective, with an anonymous author in the *Spectator* magazine describing Hogan's 1833 version of the *Dead Christ* as 'too mechanically executed', a judgement that contrasts with the distinctly positive appraisal of works by British artists, including Gibson, in the same article (Anon. 1833: 433).

Alongside Hogan's wider Catholic beliefs, we can relate the artist's desire for the *Dead Christ* to communicate 'great feeling' and 'truth' directly to the year of the sculpture's completion. Significantly, as mentioned above, 1829 saw the passing of the Catholic Relief Act, the culmination of the process of Catholic Emancipation in Britain and Ireland which saw the repeal of the remaining Penal Laws disenfranchising Catholics. Hogan had begun working on this sculpture in 1826, the same year he created his *Drunken Faun* and just three years before the passing of this Act. Seen in this light, the work's distinctly mournful, affective tone could relate directly to the plight of Irish Catholics. That is, while it may appear as an idealized and universalist classical nude, for Irish viewers the exposed and wounded body of Christ could specifically be read as an allegorical representation of the Catholic body politic, or the Catholic 'soul', of the country. As a consequence, Hogan's *Christ* emerges as a continuation of the practice, identified by Luke Gibbons, of representing Ireland as an injured body in eighteenth-century literature and art, a body that manifests the 'wounds' of the nation.

In discussing this topic, Gibbons has highlighted, in particular, painted and engraved depictions of the Greek mythological hero Philoctetes by James Barry, another Catholic artist from Cork whose work Hogan copied, in carved relief, early in his training. The Catholic politics underlying Barry's work have been discussed by scholars (e.g. Dunne 2005; Pressly 2014), while his imagery of Philoctetes (Figure 12.21) has been shown to employ distinct visual strategies to elicit sympathy from its viewers. In line with the broader image of Ireland as a 'wounded body' discussed by Gibbons, these strategies enabled the once-great hero, now wounded, weeping and abandoned, to symbolize the 'abject state into which a once great civilization has fallen under the yoke of the Penal Laws' (Gibbons 2003: 39, 70–1). Gibbons has noted, however, how the 'injured, malodorous' body of Philoctetes could also function as a 'site of solidarity with others' and thus, in the work of Barry, it could be reappropriated 'to chart successive phases in the Irish struggle for Catholic emancipation' (Gibbons 2003: 40).

French painting of this period also presented multiple images of revolutionary martyrs whose nude bodies, simultaneously 'beautiful and graceful', wounded and damaged, could be seen 'as a formal idealizing device that makes the figure into a more

Figure 12.21 James Barry, *Philoctetes*, 1777, print. British Museum, London (photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum).

effective signifier of heroic virtue' in patriotic politics (Potts 2000: 232). As Potts reminds us, such paintings of revolutionary martyrs are themselves comparable to the typical form of the dead Christ as it appeared in diverse visual depictions of the *pietà* (Potts 2000: 234). To understand such a contemporary interpretation of classicizing wounded bodies, we can return to Winckelmann, for whom the 'most intensely moving heroic body is a damaged body, one that has the pathos of a vulnerable yet indomitable subject

facing annihilation', with 'this trope of heroism' vividly played out in his reading of the *Laocoön* in which the 'body becomes powerfully moving by being represented as threatened or damaged' (Potts 2000: 234).

As with Barry's images of a vulnerable Philoctetes or French paintings of collapsed male nudes, Irish viewers of Hogan's *Christ* could equally have read the figure, carved emphatically as exposed and wounded, as a patriotic allegory, which, in this case, related to the plight, and trauma, of Ireland's Catholics resulting from over two centuries of political disenfranchisement. In contrast to Winckelmann's *Laocoön*, however, Christ offers the hope of emancipation from this bodily state. As the subject of painting and sculpture since the Renaissance, Christ's 'bodily beauty, surviving death' in artistic works provided a 'symbol of his spiritual victory over death' and 'assures us that he will rise again' (Walters 1979: 80). Indeed, the resurrection of the *Dead Christ* is potentially signified by the figure's mouth which Hogan carved as slightly open, like that of the *Recumbent Magdalene*, implying that Christ still breathes. Hogan thus provides a 'life-like and death-like image of the Redeemer, who is not dead but sleepeth' (Mulholland 1889: 484). The figure thereby emerges as an embodiment of the Catholic Irish, including Catholic artists, who will rise again in a post-Emancipation context, and the visual manifestation of Hogan's own sentiments when he wrote: 'It was a joy to my soul to hear of my being free from the Orange yoke, and I trust that the arts will now be pushed gloriously in Ireland as the bill has passed' (Atkinson 1858: 534). Indeed, such an interpretation of the sculpture was implied some years after Hogan's death, when it was described, for example, as 'famous in the times of the agitation for Catholic Emancipation' (Anon. 1879: 73).

Rome, nationalism and Hogan's male nudes: conclusions

The *Dead Christ* appears as the culmination of the intersection of the classical, the Catholic and the nationalist, as it was embodied in Hogan's idealized male nudes. The importance of this sculpture for the artist is clear from writer James Coleman who declared in 1895 that no one who visited his studio 'could fail to perceive that the subjects which had most attraction' for Hogan were the *Dead Christ*, as well as the related *Pietà* (1832), 'and the personification of his country in the form of "Hibernia"' (Coleman 1895: 214). Significantly, the latter figure referred to here is reflective of the shift in Hogan's practice from the 1830s as he began to prioritize the draped female figure, over the male nude, as the embodiment of Ireland. Following his *Dead Christ*, Hogan went on to receive major commissions in his native country from the Catholic Church, as well as from political groups and individual patrons, such as his *Monument to Bishop Doyle*, mentioned in the opening of this chapter, which yet more explicitly expresses the 'sentiment of religious patriotism' (Petrie 1840: 196). From 1849, however, when Hogan returned to live in Ireland, he created no new sculptures that attracted the same level of critical approbation as the works he completed while abroad in Rome.

From his Roman studio, it was said, Hogan could 'labour on works worthy of his country's liberality, and calculated to raise her fame amongst the civilized nations of the

world' (Petrie 1840: 196) but, following his permanent return to Ireland, as Murphy has noted, he experienced a decline in patronage, which was partially the result of his 'absence from the classical source of his inspiration' (Murphy 2010: 67). Rome in Hogan's day provided an unparalleled nexus of influences, ancient and modern, visual and discursive, and the classicizing works that resulted from the sculptor's Roman immersion highlight the vital role migration played in cultivating a classically focused Irish art practice more broadly. His male nudes, moreover, as they shifted from beautiful ephebe to intoxicated youth and finally to collapsed wounded body, reveal how Hogan's classicizing practice was, from early on, dedicated to nationalist works that increasingly reflected his Catholic identity, as well as his concerns for the political status of Catholics in Ireland. In so doing, these sculptures foreground the Irish sculptor's distinctiveness and importance among the renowned international artistic circles of early nineteenth-century Rome.

Notes

1. PRONI D1537/6 (Copy letters of John Hogan), no. 56.
2. The *Apollo Belvedere* is generally considered a copy of a fourth-century BCE Greek bronze, while scholars have argued that the *Laocoön* group also represents a copy of an original Greek bronze.
3. See note 2, above.
4. For images of the Thorvaldsen and Gibson works, see the Thorvaldsens Museum online catalogue (https://kataloget.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/en/A895) and the Art UK website (https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-sleeping-shepherd-boy-287949).
5. Author's translation ('en tant qu'incarnation de valeurs humaines universelles . . . une nouvelle importance dans l'art du néoclassicisme').
6. Author's translation ('une importance singulière . . . la reception politiseé').
7. Anon. 1855: 6 (refers to Hogan's 1853 version of *Dead Christ* in St John's Basilica, Newfoundland).
8. Following the 1829 sculpture, Hogan carved further versions in 1832 and 1853.
9. The *Recumbent Magdalene* was in England by late 1823, but Hogan could have seen the plaster model and other preparatory works in Canova's Roman studio before they were moved to Possagno, the sculptor's birthplace, in 1829–31. For more on the provenance and 'rediscovery' of the *Magdalene*, see Whitehead 2023.

CHAPTER 13
A NEW FIDELITY: EAVAN BOLAND, OVID AND EXILE

Rosie Lavan

One of Eavan Boland's most celebrated poems, 'The Pomegranate', which applies the myth of Ceres (Demeter) and Persephone to Boland's own experiences as a daughter and a mother, was written in response to an invitation from Michael Hofmann and James Lasdun to contribute to their book, *After Ovid: New Metamorphoses* (1994). There, 'The Pomegranate' appears with a Latin epigraph from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (5.536): *puniceum curva decerpserat arbore pomum* ('she had plucked the crimson fruit from a curved tree'), as Persephone reaches up in the garden of Hades and plucks the fateful pomegranate that will ensure she remains part of the year in the Underworld (Hofmann and Lasdun 1994: 140). As Jennifer Dellner notes (2011: 234), when Boland collected the poem in her volume *In a Time of Violence* (1994), she did not include the epigraph. Boland had also omitted the Latin when the poem appeared in the *New Yorker* in October 1993, and indeed while this magazine is listed in the acknowledgements for *In a Time of Violence* as the site of a prior publication of 'The Pomegranate', *After Ovid*, curiously, is not – despite the fact that Hofmann and Lasdun stated there was 'nothing in it [the book] that was not written specially for it' (Hofmann and Lasdun 1994: xi; Boland 1993: 78; Boland 1994: vi). Veering in and out of view in the publication history of the poem, this epigraph offers an intriguing starting point for a discussion of the presence of Ovid in Boland's later poetry. While Ovid's poetry is an inevitable touchstone for Boland, particularly as her preoccupation with exile became more pronounced in her poetry and criticism from the 1990s onwards, her relationship with him is never entirely straightforward. He, too, proves both visible and invisible in her work, subject to a complicated dynamic of allusion.

By the time 'The Pomegranate' was published, Boland had already assimilated, and begun to test, the influence of Ovid. The possibilities of metamorphosis are central to her seminal 1982 collection *Night Feed*, in which Florence Impens argues that a 'definite change in [Boland's] attitude to the Greek and Latin worlds' can be observed, and Sappho and Ovid emerge as 'supports in her attempts to create a space for women's voices and experiences in modern Irish poetry' (2018: 152). The directly allusive 'Daphne with her thighs in bark' transfers the nymph's predicament from Book I of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to the domestic confinement of contemporary suburbia, a territory Boland made her own. Other poems in *Night Feed* present real and fantastic changes in women's bodies and self-perception, including 'The Woman Changes Her Skin', 'The Woman Turns Herself into a Fish' and 'A Ballad of Beauty and Time', and Boland's turn to the metamorphic Ovid is a crucial strategy in this decisive phase of her feminist eloquence.

From the 1990s onwards, references to Ovid in Boland's work increasingly invoke his exile. Most often this is to be observed in her concentration on narratives of journeys, separation and loss, prominently embodied in Ceres and Persephone, or Orpheus and Eurydice, as well as in subjects she draws from Irish history and personal experience. It culminates with a direct address to Ovid in Boland's penultimate collection, *A Woman Without a Country* (2014), the volume whose title, which itself alludes to Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938), claims most explicitly the condition of gendered dislocation which was a major motivating concern of her work.

As Dellner (2011) has pointed out, Ovid, who was famously banished from Rome, is a central figure in the narrative of exile that traverses Boland's poetics. For while in 'The Pomegranate' she memorably positions herself in the role of Ceres to her unwitting teenage daughter's Persephone, she also uses the poem to present herself as a child in exile, during the years her family spent in London in the 1950s when her father was serving as the Irish Ambassador to the United Kingdom. She was, as other poems and her prose work *Object Lessons* attest, alienated and unhappy in England. On returning to Ireland in her teens, after a further period abroad in New York, where her father was Irish Ambassador to the United Nations, her years of absence continued to mark her as an outsider. Dellner (2011: 224–5) summarizes how Boland expressed her identity as exile through Ovidian reference:

> From the moment that Eavan Boland connected the Ceres-Persephone myth with Ovid via the original epigraph to her 1994 [sic] poem . . . she created Persephone as an emblem for her Irish child-self and Ovid as the mark of her exile. Reflecting on her displacement from one island (Ireland) to another (England), she discovers that this island of her exile shaped and intensified her understanding of not belonging as an experience of having lost something which she had barely – or not at all – comprehended in the first place before she was plunged into a world, as she terms it in '[The] Pomegranate', of 'fogs and strange consonants'. Though in this poem she deems it 'the only legend I have ever loved', she designates her exile in England as 'the story of a daughter lost in hell'. Out of her explication of it a tentative Ovidian poetics arises, counterpoised to Virgil and the traditional and heroic aesthetic that threatens to ensnare her.

Dellner identifies what she terms a 'poetics of rescue' in Boland's work through analysis of her poems of exile, and her differing engagements with Virgil and Ovid, particularly in the 1998 collection, *The Lost Land*. This 'poetics of rescue' is cumulative across Boland's poetry: her relationship with her classical sources evolves, becoming a key force in her work of critiquing and revising the intersecting fiats of women's experience, canonicity and national identity. In Dellner's words, 'The Ovidian Underworld, although exilic, is also a fertile place to seek what can be rescued' (2011: 229). Proceeding from Dellner's insights, this chapter considers three of Boland's later poems, to demonstrate that her engagement with Ovid is also a mode of resistance, allowing her to define, claim and express a distinctive position within Irish poetry. The first, 'Irish Poetry', appears in

Boland's 2001 collection, *Code*, while the second and third, 'Eurydice Speaks' and 'Song and Error', both come from the opening 'Song and Error' sequence of ten poems in *A Woman Without a Country*. Taken together, they reveal varying degrees of Boland's intimacy with Ovid's poetry and biography of exile, and the relevance and value of his example to her own poetics.

'Irish Poetry': Boland, Heaney and Orpheus

In order to approach 'Irish Poetry', it is necessary first to assess the significance of the presence and absence of the Latin epigraph to 'The Pomegranate'. As mentioned above, it was not included when the poem appeared in the *New Yorker*, before the publication of *After Ovid*, but presumably after the commission from Hofmann and Lasdun was received. Boland again omitted it in her collection *In a Time of Violence*. In Virginie Trachsler's discussion of the role of translation in Boland's work, Trachsler rightly asserts that the removal of the epigraph 'contributes to detaching the poem from its source' (2021: 38). Equally, it allowed Boland to distance herself from her fellow contributors to *After Ovid*. First published by Faber in Britain in 1994 and then by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in the United States the following year, *After Ovid* included work by poets from Britain, Ireland, North America, Australia and Canada, who had been invited to 'translate, re-interpret, reflect on or completely re-imagine the narratives' of the *Metamorphoses* (Hofmann and Lasdun 1994: xii). Among the many contributors, Seamus Heaney produced two translations from the *Metamorphoses* (10.1-85, 11.1-84) on the subject of Orpheus, a figure who, in Heaney's long engagement with classical material, he found especially compelling. Heaney's renderings of Ovid's Orpheus, in criticism as well as in translation, are supreme expressions of the gendered poetic norms Boland was working so hard to resist in her own work. When read as one of Boland's Ovidian poems, 'Irish Poetry' can be set against Heaney's Orphic texts, to expose the differing force of each poet's application of the language of migration, loss, exile and exclusion they adopted from their Latin model.

In a lecture given by Heaney as Oxford Professor of Poetry in October 1993, entitled 'Orpheus in Ireland', he explained that the *After Ovid* commission had been stimulating (Heaney 1996: 57). Heaney's focus on Orpheus suggested to him a connection with the eighteenth-century Irish poet Brian Merriman, whose poem *Cúirt an Mhéan-Oíche* ('The Midnight Court') was the subject of that Oxford lecture. He had recently translated Merriman's poem as *The Midnight Verdict*, and it was published under that title, along with the two Orpheus poems, by the Gallery Press in 1993. Boland's poem 'Irish Poetry', published in her 2001 collection *Code*, is an essential focal point in this debate about allusion and affiliation, which confronts Heaney's identification of Orpheus with Merriman, Irish poets and Irish poetry:

> We always knew there was no Orpheus in Ireland.
> No music stored at the doors of hell.

No god to make it.
No wild beasts to weep and lie down to it.

But I remember an evening when the sky
was underworld-dark at four,
when ice had seized every part of the city
and we sat talking –
the air making a wreath for our cups of tea.
And you began to speak of our own gods.
Our heartbroken pantheon.

No Attic light for them and no Herodotus.
But thin rain and dogfish and the stopgap
of the sharp cliffs
they spent their winters on.

And the pitch-black Atlantic night.
How the sound
Of a bird's wing in a lost language sounded.

You made the noise for me.
Made it again.
Until I could see the flight of it: suddenly

the silvery lithe rivers of the south-west
lay down in silence
and the savage acres no one could predict
were all at ease, soothed and quiet and
listening to you, as I was. As if to music. As if to peace.

Boland 2001: 52–3

'Irish Poetry' is dedicated to the poet Michael Hartnett, who died in 1999. The intimacy of the 'we' that opens the poem becomes immediately exclusive as Boland cites and negates the title of Heaney's Oxford lecture on Merriman. There is, in fact, 'no Orpheus in Ireland'. This statement emerges as a double rejection when we consider that, in a memorial speech for Hartnett, Heaney had stated: 'I'll never forget reading his first short poems in the early sixties; they had a kind of hypnotic power, as if a new Orpheus had emerged from Newcastle West' (Sirr 2017: 296). It is striking, then, that in the first line of her own memorial text for Hartnett, Boland should so totally and emphatically refute any such alliance for, to borrow the comprehensive category of her title, 'Irish Poetry' as a whole, let alone for Hartnett as an individual. The poem continues with a run of negatives which evoke the myth of Orpheus and dispute the idea of his divine music. Her memory of meeting Hartnett is delivered in a familiar Boland vignette: they share tea one evening in the city, in a scene reminiscent of her accounts of encounters with other, older Irish poets, notably Padraic Colum. In *Object Lessons* she recalls a meeting

with Colum in the mid-1960s in one of Dublin's 'old hotels with their chintzes and Sheffield trays . . . It was winter. We sat on a sofa by the window overlooking the street. The lamps were on, and a fine rain was being glamorized as it fell past their cowls' (Boland 1996: 138).

The second stanza of 'Irish Poetry', with its opening 'But', further reinforces the resistance to Heaney along with the possessive terms in which Boland recalls Hartnett speaking of 'our own gods', 'our heartbroken pantheon'. These poet-forebears are deprived both atmospherically ('thin rain' instead of 'Attic light') and of the canonical stability of the historical record, signified by Herodotus. Instead, they are exposed on the 'sharp cliffs' of the island's western edge and obscured by the 'pitch-black Atlantic night'. But there is consolation and posterity in the retrieval Hartnett delivers: he can and does make the sound of 'a bird's wing in a lost language'. Boland takes us to Hartnett's Munster, via the 'the silvery lithe rivers of the south-west', where the effect of that sound, made and remade, begins to seem at least slightly Orphic, as land and listener are calmed. The noise takes flight; suddenly rivers and 'savage acres' are soothed and quiet. Boland stops short of naming this noise as poetry; it is likened, in the poem's closing lines, to music, and to peace, but the repeated 'as if' which precedes each comparison keeps firm definition at bay.

'Irish Poetry' is a subtly woven meditation on Hartnett's work. The classical references seem to catch some of his own: the mention of Attica, the larger territory surrounding classical Athens, for instance, evokes the strange Athenian visions of 'It was a new and pagan dawn . . .' in *Anatomy of a Cliché* (1968) (Hartnett 2012: 78). Shortly before his death, Hartnett had been working on translations from the Roman poet Catullus, which were published posthumously (Hartnett 2003: 36–51). The bird's wing in Boland's poem gestures towards the recurring birds in Hartnett's writing: in the volume *A Necklace of Wrens* (1987), for example, and in individual poems, like the seabird, blackbird and bird of prey, all translated into augury, in his well-known early poem 'For My Grandmother, Bridget Halpin' (Hartnett 2012: 52). Most obviously, Boland's evocation of the Irish language signals Hartnett's famous decision, announced on the stage of the Peacock Theatre in Dublin in 1974, to renounce English and write only in Irish. In order to commit himself to mastering the language, he moved to rural County Limerick, in what the poet Peter Sirr describes as a 'self-imposed exile' (Sirr 2017: 300). He returned to Dublin, and to English, a decade later. Finally, when Boland remembers him speaking of 'our own gods. / Our heartbroken pantheon', she may well be remembering the emphasis Hartnett placed on the fact that the Limerick village in which he was born, Croom, was, as he told Dennis O'Driscoll in 1987, 'the seat of one of the last courts of poetry in Munster', with the eighteenth-century poets Sean Ó Tuama and Andrias MacCraith (O'Driscoll 1987: 18). As well as the overt allegiance to Hartnett in the dedication, then, the poem itself is an expression of dedicated attention: to Hartnett, his preoccupations and his plainly named 'noise'. Boland's title, 'Irish Poetry', is both a flatly descriptive, functional category and a bold and possessive assertion of distinction; a point of repose (or, perhaps, concession) and a point of departure.

Another latent strand of resistance to Heaney's argument in 'Orpheus in Ireland' can be identified in Boland's poem. Brian Merriman's *Midnight Court*, the focus of Heaney's

lecture, is a subversive *aisling*, a vision-poem in which the poet finds himself in a court convened by the women of Ireland who are ready to castigate and violently punish their men for failing to satisfy their sexual needs. At the end of the poet's dream vision, just before he wakes up, they pass judgment on him, sentencing him to be flailed alive, '[u]ntil', in Heaney's translation, 'every single mother's son / In the land of Ireland learns the lesson' (Heaney 2000a: 33). Heaney says that his sense of the parallel between Merriman, the eighteenth-century Co. Clare poet, and Orpheus was greatly intensified by considering the verdict on the poet in *The Midnight Court* and Orpheus' violent death at the hands of the maenads in Book 11 of the *Metamorphoses*. Heaney argues that:

> . . . Merriman's poem is backlit in an especially illuminating way if it is read in relation to the much more violent outcome of the Orpheus episode in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* . . . and the poem's claim to be considered in the context of what I called world literature is greatly enhanced. The poem remains, of course, what any vital work has to be, a response to the local conditions; but it becomes something more. Its power is augmented by being located within the force-field of an archetype.
>
> *Heaney 1996: 61*

Heaney's definition of 'world literature' contains within it the 'Eurocentric attitude' he later expressed unapologetically when discussing the politics of canonicity with Dennis O'Driscoll (O'Driscoll 2009: 456). Reading this alongside Boland's 'Irish Poetry', her rejection of an Orpheus in Ireland emerges as a necessary step in the project of self-determination her poem outlines, through the example of Hartnett. Why should the eighteenth-century, Irish-speaking Munster poet Merriman need such validation?

Such challenges are not inconsistent with the sometimes bald but often productive tensions Boland was channelling into her poetry of the late 1990s and early 2000s. They are enriched and usefully complicated when set alongside Fiona Cox's careful reading of Virgil's presence in Boland's work. Cox argues that Boland does not conscript Virgil to strengthen her sense of cultural identity. On the contrary, it is Virgil 'as poet of exiles and refugees' to whom Boland appeals (Cox 2011: 76). Boland, Cox asserts:

> . . . draws on Virgil's poetry to articulate a highly personal experience of displacement and loss, which she situates within a wider context of geographical and political exclusion. Her relationship with Virgil allows her not only to voice her experience of being exiled from the canon of Western literature on account of her gender, but also to explore her position as an Irish writer, attempting to establish an identity within the wider anglophone world. Her work strengthens a wider trend of contemporary Irish writers turning to the Classics as a means of exploring their own national identity, and yet . . . the exclusion entailed by her gender means that her experience of any negotiations of her position within such a trend are highly fraught and tenuous.
>
> *Cox 2011: 69*

Elsewhere, Boland sustains an equally personal opposition between Latin and Irish, because – as she narrates more than once in her prose writings – she had to learn the former at the expense of the latter. Returning to Ireland to conclude her secondary education, she was unable to take up Irish and had to take instead a British GCE in Latin to qualify for entrance to Trinity College Dublin. She recalled this in the 2000s, in an essay which again makes claims for a broad category, this time 'Irish literature', and her own place in it:

> The power of history enacted through the destiny of a language was an inaccurate text for understanding my own country. Irish literature, I would find, had succeeded through an opposite strategy: by taking the language of power and forcing it to tell the Irish story of injury and oppression.
>
> *Boland 2011: 232–3*

'Irish Poetry' presents that 'power of history enacted through the destiny of a language'. In the poem, and in the conflict between imperial English and native Irish, Hartnett is positioned as Boland's guide and ally. As the poem conveys it, their discourse on the crisis of the colonial suppression of language and the legacy of disorientation inherited by poets is collaborative and practical, and grounded by the ordinariness of its circumstances – a conversation over cups of tea. The nature of this encounter seems to underpin her rejection of Heaney's classicizing assertion: 'Orpheus in Ireland' was, after all, declared with professorial assurance from a lectern in Oxford.

That Oxford lecture is one of Heaney's most disheartening pronouncements on gender, in which he makes what a generous reader might describe as ill-advised remarks about 'a new feminist consensus' (Heaney 1996: 54). Ostensibly, he is objecting to a reading of Merriman's poem by Máirín de Burca who, like Boland, was centrally involved in the women's movement in Ireland in the 1970s. At the Merriman Summer School in 1980, de Burca had questioned the interpretation of *The Midnight Court* as a poem of sexual liberation, regarding it more as an exercise in male wish fulfilment (de Burca 1980: 8–9). Heaney's defence of Merriman revealed his impatience with this analysis, and his apparent reluctance to concede the legitimacy of feminist critical perspectives:

> . . . I would certainly argue that Brian Merriman should be immune to the common feminist castigation of Irish men poets for representing women (and Ireland) in the passive, submissive roles of maiden and mother. In fact, Merriman deserves a specially lenient hearing in the women's court, if only for having envisaged his own prosecution ahead of time and for having provided the outline of a case against himself. He was surely something of a progressive when it came to the representation of women. He gave them bodies and brains and let them speak as if they lived by them.
>
> *Heaney 1996: 54–5*

Heaney's lecture needs to be situated within the broader critical context it shares with Boland's 'Irish Poetry'. His comments followed prominent feminist critiques of his work,

in which first Elizabeth Butler Cullingford and then Patricia Coughlan had rightly identified those representative tendencies he excuses in Merriman in his own poetry (Cullingford 1990: 1–21; Coughlan 1991: 89–111). Heaney was more explicit still in an interview published in 2002, where he acknowledged Coughlan's analysis directly. Intriguingly, as Coughlan herself went on to demonstrate, he took the opportunity to consolidate his stance through an alliance which, in Coughlan's words, 'involves his own explicit identification with the Orpheus–Merriman figure as beleaguered culture-carrier' (Coughlan 2007: 35). This is arguably a complex counterpoint to his more prominent identification, from his 1991 collection *Seeing Things* through to his posthumously published translation *Aeneid Book VI* (2016), with Virgil and his hero Aeneas. In the 2002 interview, Heaney further elaborated on the connections he had discerned between Ovid's account of the death of Orpheus at the hands of the Maenads, and the accusations and threats levelled at the Merriman figure by the women's court. 'The story of Orpheus which I translated, "The Death of Orpheus," I chose that because it's hard not to read it in the context of our own contemporary gender wars . . . I suppose my translation relates to the critical wars and the political wars between feminist critics and male poets: Dead-White-European-Male versus the rest, so to speak. And poor Orpheus is super-dead, super-white, super-European' (Thomas 2002: 58–9). Notably, Heaney presents a dichotomy between 'feminist critics and male poets', leaving the female poet, like Boland, marooned in the kind of gendered exile identified by Cox in the quotation above.

'Orpheus in Ireland' also sounds a defensive note on behalf of Heaney's colleagues and friends in the Field Day Company, who were still embroiled in the debate which followed the publication of the *Field Day Anthology* in 1991. As is well known, he and Boland were on opposite sides of this much revisited argument, though the publication of Heaney's *Letters* in 2023 has revealed his keener sensitivity to the *Anthology*'s shortcomings than his public statements suggested. Writing to John Wilson Foster in January 1992 he acknowledged 'the (entirely justifiable) ire of feminist Ireland', and in June 1992 to Thomas Kilroy, who had just resigned as a fellow Field Day director, he admitted 'foresuffer[ing] the consequences of no women directors and no women editors' (Heaney 2023: 377, 384). Most extensively, he professed to Ted Hughes in September 1992 his feeling that 'cabinet responsibility dictates solidarity' among Field Day colleagues, but:

> . . . the book sins indefensibly in many areas: no women editors, no 'feminist discourse' section . . .; too much 'non-revisionist' historical perspective. Vah! But I am more alive than before to the immense rage which man-speak, or even men speaking, now produces. The historical tide is running against almost every anchor I can throw towards what I took to be the holding places.
>
> *Heaney 2023: 389*

Despite certain persistently gendered limitations, notably the unfortunately maenadic 'rage', these letters, and the strongly held but privately expressed concessions they make, lend new nuance to one of the most familiar episodes in recent Irish literary history.

They remained under the cover of personal correspondence in 1992, though, so in returning to the public debate of that time it is instructive to reconsider the Field Day controversy in the light of Heaney and Boland's Orpheus texts.

In February 1992 Boland co-organized and chaired a public debate on the *Anthology*'s comprehensive neglect of writing by women. Boland stated that while her own work featured in the selection of contemporary poetry, she was 'sorry to be included in an anthology which excludes women' (Donovan 1992: 10; Crowe 2003). Later that year, at the conference of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (IASIL) at Trinity College Dublin, Boland delivered one of the keynote addresses, which she called 'The Irish Woman Poet: Her Place in Irish Literature'. Necessarily, she used the terms 'Irish poetry', 'Irish literature', 'the Irish poem', and 'the Irish poet' freely in her discussion. At the outset, she asserts that there is an opportunity, through the 'new work and radical departures' poetry by women offers, 'to look again at Irish poetry and revise certain assumptions about it' (Boland 1995: 32). So, by the time she comes to name her poem for Michael Hartnett 'Irish Poetry', the term comes freighted with the arguments about tradition and exclusion which she had made her own. Boland's own narrative of childhood exile in London is at the heart of her 1992 IASIL lecture, personalizing her discussion of tradition. She concludes with the assertion that a more inclusive culture in Irish poetry would 'constitute[s] an increase in artistic freedom, a precious addition of idiom and vista in what is already one of our most precious possessions: the Irish poem' (Boland 1995: 47). These convictions are further reinforced in a later poem which evokes Orpheus' wife, Eurydice, in the Underworld.

'Eurydice Speaks': a new fidelity

'Eurydice Speaks' was published in Boland's penultimate collection, *A Woman Without a Country*. It is a direct address from wife to husband:

> How will I know you in the underworld?
> How will we find each other?
>
> We lived for so long on the physical earth
> Our skies littered with actual stars,
>
> Practical tides in our bay –
> What will we do with the loneliness of the mythical?
>
> Walking beside ditches brimming with dactyls,
> By a ferryman whose feet are scanned for him
> On the shore of a river written and re-written
> As elegy, epic, epode.
>
> Remember the thin air of our earthly winters?
> The gas ring burned blue flowers.

Frost was an iron, underhand descent.
Dusk was always in session

And no one needed to write down
Or re-state, or make a record of, or ever would,
And never will,
The plainspoken music of recognition,

Nor mark how I stood at the window –
The hills darkening all around, saying,
As a shadow became a stride
And a raincoat was woven out of streetlight

I would know you anywhere.

Boland 2014: 21

The situations of Eurydice – abruptly separated from Orpheus by her early death – and the speaker of the poem are evidently distinct. In this respect, a specific instance of a more general Ovidian resonance might be identified. Ovid's *Heroides*, the sequence of epistolary monologues which imagined the written voices of mythical heroines as well as their male counterparts, begins with Penelope's address to Ulysses. At the end of her letter, she instructs her husband, in Harold Isbell's translation (Ovid 2004a: 6): 'Just remember, I was a young girl when you left; / if you came at once you would find an old woman.' Indeed, Boland's Eurydice invites some parallels with Ovid's re-visioned Penelope. While Boland, who married her husband Kevin Casey in 1969, is writing from the vantage point of a long and settled marriage, anticipating separation by death, and Ovid presents Penelope writing across two decades of separation from Ulysses, there is in both texts a commitment to a candid reflection of married life as it has unfolded for each couple. Isbell (in Ovid 2004a: 2) points out Ovid's innovation in this, emphasizing the contrast with the *Odyssey*, where:

> . . . Penelope can hardly be said to define any reality in which she exists. Homer's Penelope achieves her ends not so much by asserting herself as by proceeding indirectly, even by passivity. If the Penelope of Homer is the conventional wife to such a degree that she can become an exemplar, then Ovid's Penelope is unconventional, and though she is successful in her aims she gives new meaning to the notion of fidelity.

Isbell's idea of the speaker defining 'the reality in which she exists' is a persuasive one to relate to Boland's Eurydice, all the more so if we rinse it first through another, more suggestive, translation of Penelope's closing lines. In her reworking of the *Heroides*, *Ovid's Heroines* (2013), Clare Pollard has Penelope sign off her letter with the couplet, 'As for myself, I was a young girl when you went away, / but you'll come back to a fully-grown woman' (Pollard 2013: 18). By resisting the more direct translation of the Latin word

anus as 'old woman', Pollard sheds the age-old burden of assumption surrounding women and age, thus rendering the passage of time a process of gain, not loss, for Penelope – a decision which is congenial to the valorization of maturity in Boland's late depiction of married partners. Cox identifies in Pollard's translation 'a shift in cultural attitudes … Not only does the term "fully-grown woman" possess an allure that is utterly absent from "old woman", but it also points to changes in what each generation thinks of as "old"' (Cox 2018: 209). Arguably, the progress Pollard and Boland make in their depictions of the fully-grown Penelope and Eurydice emerges from earlier expressions of poetic resistance to the confines of tradition and retelling. When H.D.'s Eurydice speaks, for example, she reproaches Orpheus with vivid and peremptory questions, ultimately finding repose only in a clear assertion of self-possession: 'At least I have the flowers of myself, / and my thoughts, no god / can take that' (H.D. 1983: 55). Boland's questions in 'Eurydice Speaks' are cooler; this is a relationship in which the reader infers long-standing parity.

While Boland imagines the afterlife in classical terms, it is not invested with foreboding. The tangibility of the couple's mortal lives ('physical', 'actual', 'practical') gives way, in the third stanza, to the poetics of Hades, undermined by Boland's will to materialize it through the language of prosody. Charon is relieved of his habitual role as grim chaperone and left simply as 'a ferryman', whose double-meaning 'feet' are 'scanned for him'. The rest of the poem returns to the real life of lived, remembered winters, snatches of recalled images which in themselves recall other poems by Boland. The winter of 'The Pomegranate' is darker ('The stars are hidden') perhaps because the poem is voiced by the mother who identifies with the bereft Ceres (Boland 1994: 20). In 'Love', the poem which precedes 'The Pomegranate' in *In a Time of Violence*, the reader is transported to a US Midwestern winter. Here too a wife addresses her husband, this time recalling the serious illness of one of their children. She returns to the present ('Our child is healed. We love each other still'), and yet, she continues, imagining her husband as 'a hero in a text', 'I want to return to you … and I long to cry out the epic question / my dear companion: // Will we ever live so intensely again?' (Boland 1994: 18–19). The parallel with Orpheus and Eurydice has been widely noted: 'Love' ends with the wife's Orphic predicament. She knows her 'words are shadows' which go unheard by her husband, to whom she makes the final futile address: 'You walk away and I cannot follow' (Boland 1994: 19). Through this failed effort at communication the speaker suffers loss like Orpheus, as her husband, vivid as he was in memory, fades irretrievably into the darkness, like Eurydice.

Boland is also inhabiting autobiography when, in 'Eurydice Speaks', she offers the detail of the gas ring burning 'blue flowers': this is the same remembered territory of the early days of the couple's relationship which she evokes in 'Atlantis – A Lost Sonnet': Dublin as the 'old city' of 'white pepper, white pudding' and Georgian fanlights (Boland 2007: 63). Above all, 'Eurydice Speaks' is a significant continuation of the literary commitment Boland made in her poem 'Against Love Poetry', the second in the sequence 'Marriage', published in *Code*. 'Against Love Poetry', a prose poem, is also addressed to Boland's husband, and tackles her apparently competing loves for him and for 'the idea of women's freedom'. The resistance to poetry in 'Eurydice Speaks' has its roots here: 'Love

poetry can do no justice to this,' she says (Boland 2001: 5). But as Jody Allen Randolph points out, while this is '[c]ast as a stance against love poetry, the sequence is actually an amendment to it', it is also exemplary of Boland's efforts to expand and revise what the traditions of poetry have permitted (Randolph 2014: 155). To put it another way, this is an instance of her broader 'poetics of rescue' identified by Dellner.

'Eurydice Speaks' tries to imagine, first through the repudiated framework of poetic retellings of classical mythology, then through a reversion to personal experience, what happens after death. Consistent with its emphasis on the pragmatic, it eschews elegy, and even any overt expression of emotion, but it does pose markedly objective questions about presence, loss and memory. In this it accords with Robert Rowland Smith's arresting statement in his study of the Freudian death-drive: 'Death cannot be experienced as such, but it can be believed in; indeed it can only be believed in, which means that the character of death as it relates to humans must be rhetorical, a matter of promise or persuasion in the absence of a secure referent or signified' (Smith 2010: xiii). To rhetorical we might also add metaphorical, or allusive. After the interrogative at the beginning of the fourth stanza, which casually approaches the metaphysical ('Remember the thin air of our earthly winters?'), the poet tells us no record was or would need to be kept of 'The plainspoken music of recognition'. But she does so in the implied knowledge of another point made by Rowland Smith: 'That is something that death brings, an end to memory, the impossibility of remembering anything ever again' (Smith 2010: 31).

The directness of Boland's title for this poem suggests decisive redress. But in both Virgil and Ovid's retellings of Orpheus' attempt to retrieve Eurydice from the Underworld, she does speak. Virgil, in Book IV of the *Georgics*, is the more generous. The pivotal scene on the journey out of the Underworld is rendered with occasional Shakespearean gravity by C. Day Lewis:

> Who, she cried, has doomed me to misery, who has doomed us?
> What madness beyond measure? Once more a cruel fate
> Drags me away, and my swimming eyes are drowned in darkness.
> Good-bye. I am borne away. A limitless night is about me
> And over the strengthless hands I stretch to you, yours no longer.
> Thus she spoke: and at once from his sight, like a wisp of smoke
> Thinned into air, was gone.
>
> *Virgil,* Georgics *IV.486-92; Virgil 1983: 125*

David Raeburn points out, in his translation of the *Metamorphoses*, that 'Ovid tells this famous story very much in his own playful way. He clearly wanted to do it differently from Virgil's beautiful treatment in *Georgics* 4' (Ovid 2004b: 380). Ovid's version of the scene, in Heaney's 1993 translation, has Eurydice muttering faint farewells, in contrast to the extended lament in Virgil:

> He reached his arms out, desperate to hold
> And be held on to, but his arms just filled

With insubstantial air. She died again,
Bridal and doomed, but still did not complain
Against her husband – as indeed how could she
Complain about being loved so totally?
Instead, as she slipped away, she called out dear
And desperate farewells he strained to hear.

Heaney 2000a: 17–18

Cox emphasizes the extent of Boland's exploration of 'the power of change, and of being able to choose to change' (Cox 2018: 11). Glimpsed even briefly in this wider context of translation and reception, and particularly after Heaney's rendering of Ovid's markedly forgiving Eurydice, the revisionism Boland executes in her poem emerges much more clearly. She occupies the myth as a grown woman; she retrieves the voice of Eurydice from a narrative in which she can be contained by Heaney with the adjectives '[b]ridal and doomed'; and she moves from indistinctness into the certainty of recognition. The final line of Boland's poem, textually distinguished by italics, seals this in the affirmation '*I would know you anywhere.*' Whether this is strong enough to answer the questions with which the poem began – 'How will I know you in the underworld? / How will we find each other?' – cannot, because of the way the poem meanders through memory, be conclusively judged, but what we are left with is a poem as much against loss as it is against love poetry. In contemplating the final journey the partners will make after life, the poem tests the alienation of exile in death against the intensity of their earthly companionship.

'Song and Error': the poet in exile

'Eurydice Speaks' is the penultimate poem in a sequence which bears the explicitly Ovidian title 'Song and Error'. Boland's challenge to the conventions of love poetry, and her revision of her classical models, allow us to extend the implications of the allusion still further. Famously, Ovid asserted that he had been banished from Rome to Tomis on the Black Sea by Augustus due to '*carmen et error*', the 'song and error' Boland adopts here. But accounts of Ovid's exile have always had to adjudicate between the evidence provided by the poet himself, in what Matthew M. McGowan (2009: 1) calls 'his complex and variegated literary response to his exile', namely his *Tristia* ('Sorrows') and *Epistulae ex Ponto* ('Letters from the Black Sea'), along with the invective *Ibis*, and the absence of any other historical record. The offending 'song' is readily identified as his *Ars Amatoria* ('The Art of Love'), which prompted, in Jo-Marie Claassen's (2008: 2) words, 'an accusation of subversion of public morality'. The 'error', Claassen says, is 'rather mysterious . . . perhaps political', but according to Ovid 'not illegal' (2008: 2). Both McGowan and Claassen position their analyses of Ovid's works in exile in wider discussions about the function of poetry. For Claassen, '[w]hy an exiled poet would have resorted to the very medium and even metric form that caused his downfall is a question that should always be considered

when looking at the nature of Ovid's exilic poems' (2009: 2). McGowan adopts Heaney's principle of the 'redress of poetry' to argue for Ovid's 'redress of exile': 'the poet exploits his predicament in exile by transforming an historical reality into a metaphorical motif to create in verse a place of intellectual refuge' (2009: 4–5). An understanding of Boland's engagement with Ovid is valuably deepened by these perspectives. Claassen's question about the return to poetry, and Ovid's fidelity to the elegiac couplet in his exilic poetry, resonates with Boland's own commitment to the medium, the traditions of which she sought consistently to alter and expand. To borrow McGowan's terms, if poetry is not usually or exclusively a place of refuge for Boland, because of the restless energy with which she confronted its habits of exclusion, she can nonetheless be seen to enact a similar transformation of exile from 'historical reality' to 'metaphorical motif'. This is a tendency which can be widely observed in her work but is especially concentrated and suggestive in her imaginative re-enactment of Ovid's own exile.

In the title poem of Boland's 'Song and Error' sequence, she makes a direct and affectionate address to Ovid, 'the Old Latin Master', unwilling exile and unflagging correspondent, dying in 'the drizzle of the Black Sea':

> Ovid I loved you when I was a girl.
> I hated my fair skin and freckles.
> My irregular eyes with yellow in the middle.
> ~
> You were my laureate of escape.
> You filled the peacock's tail with human eyes.
> You showed me how to flee from entity to being.
>
> *Boland 2014: 22*

In 'girl' we see the girl-in-exile, discussed above in 'The Pomegranate', as Boland juxtaposes her early love for the poet with hatred for her physical distinctiveness. The next assertion, 'You were my laureate of escape', develops that love into clarity and realization, an understanding, perhaps, that the dramatic flight from 'entity' to 'being' is partly achieved by acceptance. This transition bridges a fine distinction between the two nouns for states and conditions of existence, but it is characteristic of Boland, and the fact that 'being' is also a verb is essential to the progress, under Ovid's influence, that she is narrating. She offers, in the closing stanzas, an evening scene from Tomis:

> When evening comes a boy who cannot speak Latin
> Reaches to light the lamp.
> He holds a candle made from the pith of rushes.
> ~
> He touches the wick.
> The room brightens quickly.
> He has no language for the Empire that owns him.
>
> *Boland 2014: 23*

Here, Boland's sympathies are divided, as she transfers her allegiance from Ovid the exile to the boy who attends him, to significant effect.

More than once in the *Tristia* and *Letters from the Black Sea*, Ovid dwells on the language barrier in his Black Sea environment, as here in Peter Green's translation from *Tristia* 5.10.35-42:

> They have commerce with one another through their common language,
> while I must use signs to indicate my needs.
> Here *I'm* the barbarian, understood by no one,
> and these stupid peasants mock my Latin speech,
> slander me to my face with impunity, on occasion
> (I suspect) laugh at my exile. When I reply
> to their talk with a nod or a shake of the head, they find me
> silly, absurd.
>
> *trans. Green in Ovid 2005: 100*

As others have done, Green carefully questions the full extent of the intellectual isolation Ovid professes, and he charts Ovid's shifting attitudes to the languages which surrounded him in exile. Ovid refers to Getic and Sarmatian, and his efforts to gain proficiency in them; Green suggests it is more likely he learned 'the bastardized Greek lingua franca of the area' but stresses that '[t]he important fact, psychologically, is that he took such a step at all' (Green in Ovid 2005: xxxii–xxxiii). It is a concession to an exile that Ovid was bitterly resisting, an indication of his diminishing hope of returning home. Boland, however, closes the scene by allowing the psychology of the colonized to eclipse that of the exile. The boy is doubly disenfranchised in his own home: by the exercise of the Empire that owns him, in a language he does not speak. And he is not the famous poet: his anonymity, a condition Boland has bestowed on him because history's erasures are always compelling to her, is only compromised by his enforced servitude. While this might not constitute a rejection of Ovid, Boland again uses the progression of maturity to complicate her response to the Latin poet. 'I loved you when I was a girl', she confesses, but it is the enslaved boy, not the old master, with whom her sympathies come to rest.

Boland's Ovid: conclusions

There is a danger, not unfamiliar in Boland's work, that the boy she portrays in 'Song and Error' might appear too obviously emblematic, his silence too easy to align with narratives either of unquestioning colonial subservience or of subversive anticolonial rebellion. Nonetheless, he is an appropriate figure with whom to close this discussion, because his presence in that poem illuminates Boland's relationship with Ovid in its profundity but also its mobility. Boland's self-identification as an exiled child in an imperial culture in 'The Pomegranate' is seen again in the boy in Tomis. Her fixation on the language question in Ovid's exile evokes the 'lost language' of 'Irish Poetry', a poem in which she

makes clear her contrasting attitudes to her contemporaries: Michael Hartnett is the admired and implicitly elegized dedicatee, but she vies indirectly with Seamus Heaney through their oppositional deployment of classical material and allusion. Boland's rejection of Orpheus, and by extension of the version of the Irish poet Heaney presents in his criticism and translations of the early 1990s, grants a fresh perspective on her ambition to make the category and the tradition of Irish poetry more genuinely inclusive.

In 'Eurydice Speaks', Boland presents a woman who inhabits her marriage with the pragmatic assurance of maturity, who understands that death and its aftermath are disorientating not because of what they are but because of what mythology and poetry have made them. Once again, through her reactivation of classical material she also advances her own poetics, lending Eurydice's voice to her argument against love poetry. In 'Song and Error' the pattern of Boland's engagements with Ovid emerges. Unlike Heaney, she does not seek an alter ego in the poet or his poet-hero Orpheus. Characteristically, she finds her solidarity with the subaltern: the deprived 'we' of 'Irish Poetry'; Eurydice the wife; and the unnamed colonial subject in Tomis. Furthermore, in each of these poems, Boland claims, or commemorates, an interlocutor: Hartnett in 'Irish Poetry'; the husband in 'Eurydice Speaks'; Ovid himself, exemplary exile, in 'Song and Error'. 'All poets speak in quotations', writes Alison Sharrock (2002: 150) in her discussion of Ovid's amatory works. For Boland, the dialogue she sustains with Ovid in these poems, evoking literal, gendered and metaphysical forms of exile, becomes its own 'plainspoken music of recognition', a revisionary poetics which resists 'the loneliness of the mythical'.[1]

Note

1. Thanks are due to Peter Sirr, Tom Walker and participants in the Classical Migrations conference for enlightening exchanges on Michael Hartnett, Seamus Heaney and the *Heroides*.

PART V
TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRISH *ODYSSEYS*

CHAPTER 14
AN IRISH *ODYSSEY*: TRADITION AND AUTOFICTION IN PÁDRAIG DE BRÚN'S *AN ODAISÉ*

Richard P. Martin

The classicist and poet Anne Carson has located the act of translation in a 'place where you are standing at the edge of a word and you can see across the gap to the other word . . . and that space, between the word you are at and the word you can't get to is unlike any other space in language' (quoted in Macintosh 2022: 262). She might not object to my naming this situation 'the migrant's mirage'. For 'word' read 'world' – the migrant stands at the ocean's edge and sees, at least in her mind's eye, that distant shore. Getting over is a problem of linguistics as well as logistics. Across the wide gap lies a land where everything will be said aslant. I think also that Monsignor Patrick Browne (or as he preferred, Pádraig de Brún) would understand the dilemma, this complex and tenuous relationship that marks a person's movement between cultures and languages, past and present. His translation into Irish of Homer's *Odyssey* not only embodies such an understanding, but also builds multiple bridges amongst islands of identity.

If poems sometime succeed in bridging the chasm that Anne Carson peers across, it is because they are constructed atop metaphor – literally a 'carrying over' (from the Greek *metaphora*). To extend this logic, *translating* a lengthy poem is like transporting a bridge. De Brún's poetic act of carrying over – his *translation* – of the *Odyssey* is a very long bridge (if not the Danyang–Kunshan, then at least the verbal equivalent of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway). Through it, he manages consistently to capture more of the implications of the Greek than most modern English translators. How he does this will be my main focus; how he inscribes himself into the poem will be a short *coda*.

Vocabulary of migration

Two and a half millennia ago, before such things as national borders existed, the *Odyssey* was already formulating the mixture to be found in every later tale of migration – a combination of violence, otherness, longing and the constant threat that one's identity could be irreparably erased.[1] Given the mobility of the Irish from the days of Columcille onward – whether as exiles, pilgrims, economic migrants, fugitives or some combination thereof – it is not surprising that their literature, as much as ancient Greek, would develop an extensive and rich discourse about going away, including some key terms. Texts from the Old Irish period to the nineteenth century, whether legal treatises or poems of exile,

resound with the word *deorad* (modern Irish *deoraí*). The electronic *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (*eDIL*) provides a compact example of the word's range:

> 'Outsider, outcast; person whose protection and rights have been restricted/ forfeited. . . . native freeman . . . a man for whom his *fine* [i.e. family group] have renounced responsibility . . . In general outlaw, exile, stranger, wanderer: . . . Often with notion of indigence, need, defencelessness implied . . . alien, foreign mercenary . . . a pilgrim'.[2]

The *Odyssey*, given its thematic core, offers ready parallels. The reunion of Laertes with his long-lost son Odysseus is one of the most pathos-filled scenes in the poem. Before revealing himself, Odysseus ratchets up the emotion by telling his father about having met the absent 'Odysseus'. Unaware of Odysseus' identity, Laertes addresses him as the purported stranger who claims to have hosted his son (*Od*. 24.281-90):

> 'Stranger [*xein*'] know that you have come to the country of which you ask, but wanton and reckless men now possess it. And all in vain did you bestow those gifts, the countless gifts you gave. For if you had found him still alive in the land of Ithaca, then would he have sent you on your way with ample requital of gifts and good entertainment [*xeniēi agathēi*]; for that is the due of him who begins the kindness. But come, tell me this, and declare it truly. How many years have passed since you entertained [*xeinissas*] that guest, that unfortunate guest [*son xeinon dustēinon*], my son – if he ever existed – my ill-fated son . . .
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 433*[3]

Laertes' response illustrates the semantic range of the Greek word *xeinos*, which can denote host, guest or stranger. He addresses the man before him as 'stranger' (*xeinos*) but then refers to his having entertained Odysseus with the phrase 'good *xeinia*' – not 'strangerness' but 'hospitality'. In this reciprocal practice, every wanderer is a potential guest and future host. The Greek poet then makes an artful rhetorical juxtaposition. Laertes' own lost son was, according to what he has been told, the *xeinos* of the man who now stands before him – that is, they shared a close bond, more recently than Laertes had with Odysseus. And yet, Odysseus while being the stranger's *guest*, is still *his son* – or was he? The wistful formula 'if he ever existed' [εἴ ποτ᾽ ἔην γε] is used five times in Homeric poetry to imply 'maybe that was all a dream it was so long ago'.[4]

Homeric Greek uses the same root (*xein-*) for stranger, guest and hospitality. Compare the rendition by de Brún (1990: 443):

> *Abair an méid seo liom, áfach, is inis go fírinneach cruinn é:*
> *Cén fhaid blian ó thugais an fhéile don bhfear sin, a dheoraí,*
> *Cóisireach gan rath; má mhair agam féin mac riamh, ba é siúd é*
> *D'fhearaibh an donais . . .*

De Brún in Irish cannot rely on anything like the compact semantic network of Homeric Greek; '*thugais an fháile*' ('you gave hospitality') translates *xeinissas* while another lexeme covers 'guest': *son xeinon dustēinon* in de Brún is *cóisireach gan rath*, the much more abstract 'luckless festivity'. Yet de Brún manages something equally artful. In the Greek at this point (lines 287–8), there is no vocative (it had occurred instead at 281). But de Brún chooses just this spot to interject one: *a dheoraí* ('O stranger'). It is as if he summons up the distance and unfamiliarity of *xeinos* in its sense of 'exile, wanderer' (like that of *deoraí*) precisely at the point where in the Greek the root signals the *opposite*, the welcomed '*guest*'. In this way he succeeds in capturing the tension and inversion in the whole passage, where in fact the disguised *xeinos* who faces his father *is* both insider and outsider.

One way, then, to talk about migration and related themes in the *Odyssey* would be to track how such words themselves cross borders like this. But I should like to try something different. In what follows, I excavate various *levels* of engagement. My metaphor is now the opposite of migratory horizontal movement: it is a process of digging vertically down to capture how a literature's diachronic depth is mapped onto a contemporary translation. Even in its textual history there are chronological levels to be taken into account: de Brún, whose time was expended on work as a priest, professor and administrator, as well as poet, finished *An Odaisé* in the 1940s, yet it remained unpublished until 1990, three decades after his death (a point to which I return in the concluding section). One has to evaluate it, consequently, in comparison with Homer translations of the time, before the boom in postwar versions of the epics. My stratigraphic approach unearths at least three other levels, although here I must abandon archaeological pretensions about a cleanly preserved site and acknowledge that levels leak into one another. It is fair to say that we glimpse within de Brún's version, first, some shared archaic institutions that are encapsulated in a single, highly resonant term; second, verbal intimations of motifs from several long-lived Irish genres; and third, verbal details that bring the translation into contact with earlier bardic compositions and also the related later verse-making of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These echoes are in themselves a pleasure to experience while reading. Moreover, at all three levels – societal, generic and dictional – we are drawn by his masterful work back to the original with a new appreciation of its specific meanings.

Before moving into our main discussion of the three areas outlined above, it is worth noting at the outset some metrical resemblances. De Brún chose a line comprising fifteen to nineteen syllables, a rough equivalent to the Greek dactylic hexameter, which ranged from twelve to seventeen syllables. More importantly, de Brún's meter regularly features a mid-line caesura, most often after the seventh or eighth syllable. (The equivalent in the Greek line would be the nearly-universal penthemimeral or trochaic caesurae.) Most important, such shaping of the verse in Irish corresponds to the syllabic structure of traditional bardic meters such as the commonly employed *deibide*, with its regular seven-syllable quatrains (see further Knott 1957; Murphy 1961).

Shared archaic terminology

In the category of central archaic institutions, the prominence of 'fame' immediately captures the attention. The Greek word *kleos* – etymologically 'what is heard' (cognate with English 'loud') – encapsulates the crucial power of oral tradition as the vehicle for ensuring heroic glory over generations to come. In a famous Homeric passage (*Il.* 9.412-16), Achilles speaks of his choice between a brief life compensated by 'unwithering fame' (*kleos aphthiton*) in opposition to a long life, less glorified but guaranteeing a *nostos* ('return home').[5] Odysseus, in securing his own *nostos* while at the court of the Phaeacians, also makes a highly marked reference to his own heroic 'fame' (*Od.* 9.19-20):

> I am Odysseus, son of Laertes, known to all men for my stratagems, and my fame [*kleos*] reaches the heavens.
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 317*

For both heroes the assertion of lasting fame came true, since their commemoration in poetic tradition endures even now. It is appropriate that one of the earliest attestations of the word for 'fame' in Old Irish comes in an eighth-century prayer for long life that is completely pagan in tone, including an invocation of the 'seven daughters of the sea' (one thinks of the sea-nymph Thetis, Achilles' mother):

> *Ní nascthar <u>mo chlú</u> ar chel*
> *dom(thí) áes nímthí bás corba sen.*
>
> My fame will not be bound in death!
> Let old age come to me! – death shall not come to me until I am old!
>
> *text and trans. Meyer 1914*

Unlike the tragic Achilles, the anonymous Irish supplicant wants it all: long life *as well as* fame beyond death (that is, a more Odyssean career). De Brún (1990: 148) uses this old exact cognate *clú* to translate the Greek *kleos*:

> *Mise Odaiséas Laeirtéis, an té sin go mbíonn ar a chúinsí*
> *Insint i scéalta na cruinne, is <u>a chlú ag dul go crannaibh na spéire</u>.*

He thus taps into one of the most ancient institutions that unites ancient Greek with Irish literature: poetic praise. Both cultures share, along with the lexical item, a whole constellation of practices tied up with heroic ideology and the role of professional performers (see further Watkins 1995, especially 68–78).

A similar sense of twinned practices arises when we turn to three other words that carry with them generic associations centered on social institutions. Although the Greek terms are (unlike 'fame', *kleos* = *clú*) not translated using cognate nouns, de Brún's very selection of a particular word summons up a nexus of event, plot and verbal genre. The

three terms are raiding, pursuit and lament. Each, of course, is instantiated within Irish literature in well-known compositions, which I need not discuss in detail (see J. Nagy 1986 on genres in the medieval Irish tale-lists). Here I simply point to them in the service of a reception-aesthetic applied to de Brún's rendition. The parallels should remind us that such associative semantic bundles were already formalized within tale-telling traditions in archaic Greek. At least one of them – lament – continues to this day as a formal sociopoetic ritual in the deep Peloponnese (details and comparisons in Martin 2003).

The phrase *táin bó*, for example, meaning 'cattle raid', immediately summons up the great medieval tale featuring Cú Chulainn as its protagonist, the *Taín Bó Cúailnge* ('Cattle Raid of Cooley'). We know that the recensions of the story preserved in the twelfth-century Book of Leinster and Book of the Dun Cow (*Lebor na hUidre*) represent just one narrative (the longest to survive) from a recognized genre of such cattle-raids (*tána*). The phrase occurs resonantly in de Brún's rendition of the complicated backstory that accompanies the figure of Theoclymenus, a migrant fleeing persecution for a crime who is offered hospitality by Odysseus' son Telemachus in the *Odyssey*. Theoclymenus' ancestry is traced by the poet back to his great-grandfather Melampus, who suffered imprisonment on a mission to obtain cattle that would enable his brother's marriage to Pero, the daughter of Neleus (*Od*. 15.233-6). Despite an attack of madness from the house-ruining goddess Erinys, 'He escaped his fate, however, and drove off the deep-lowing cattle [ἤλασε βοῦς ἐριμύκους] to Pylos from Phylace . . .' (trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 93–5). De Brún has:

> *Más ea, ďéalaigh sé ar deireadh ón ngéibheann lena anam, is bhagair*
> *Táin bó géimneach go Piolas ó Fhilice . . .*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 276*

The Irish *bhagair táin bó géimneach* translates the Greek verbal phrase ἤλασε βοῦς ἐριμύκους ('drove off the deep-lowing cattle'). That this institution of cattle-raiding is ancient, even from the standpoint of Homeric verse, is evident from its linkage to the legendary generational past. It is also evident that cattle-raiding is intimately bound up with marriage. In a traditional subsistence economy, after all, the fastest way to acquire a considerable bride-price is to take goods from someone else (see Dunn 1989 on the linked themes in medieval literature). The *Táin Bó Cúailnge* toys with this connection indirectly, but it is a *remscél* (prefatory tale) to the great *Táin*, the smaller *Táin Bó Froích* (*Raid of Froech's Cattle*), that makes the ties between marriage and raiding explicit (text and translation in Meid 2015). In reading de Brún's rendition, one cannot help but notice also his urge to ornament with alliteration (*ďéalaigh . . . deireadh; cruinne . . . crannaibh*, etc.). That device was, of course, widespread in Irish heroic saga prose but also marks Irish poetry of all eras. A few lines later, we are told that Melampus subsequently acquired his due kingship in Argos (*Od*. 15.238-40), 'for there it was appointed him to dwell, bearing sway [ἀνάσσοντ᾽] over many Argives' (trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 95). The words that de Brún chooses to describe the refugee's rule are '*Ríocht agus réimeas*' (1990: 276; 'kingdom and authority'), giving two nouns in place of the single Greek participle.

De Brún's language echoes a phrase from a poem by Pádraig Piarais Cúndún (a native speaker who migrated from Cork to Deerfield, New York, in the early nineteenth century): *gan stát gan dún gan riúcht gan réimheas* (Ó Foghludha 1932: 32, verse 78), meaning 'without a state without a fortress without a kingdom without authority'.

The story of Theoclymenos continues in his own voice a bit later (*Od.* 15.272-8):

> Even so have I, too, fled from my country, because I slew a man, one of my own kin [*emphulon*]. And many brethren and kinsmen of his there are in horse-pasturing Argos, and mightily do they bear sway over the Achaeans. It is to shun death and black fate at their hands that I flee, since, it seems, it is my lot [*aisa*] to be a wanderer among men. But set me upon your ship, since in my flight [*phygōn*] I have made prayer to you, that they may not utterly slay me; for I think they are in pursuit.
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 97*

On the run, having killed a man of the same tribe (*emphulon*), his lot becomes that of the wanderer. In the Irish, the notion of 'fated' or 'allotted portion' (in the Greek, *aisa*) is made more prominent through a phrase that neatly rhymes with one de Brún had used shortly before this:

> *Táimse á seachaint 's ag teitheadh ón éag 's ó lá na cinniúna,*
> *Is tuigim gur dán dom go deo a bheith i m'fhánaí ar thalamh na ndaoine.*
> *Fáiltigh i t'árthachsa romham, ós deoraí atá ag achainí ort,*
> *Is ná lig dóibh mé a mharú, mar is cinnte go bhfuilid a'm' thóraíocht.*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 278*

Theoclymenos in this rendition is fleeing the fated day of death (*lá na cinniúna*) whereas his ancestor was tortured by the Fury (Erinys) whom de Brún named 'a goddess of the women of Fate' (*diabhean de Mhná na Cinniúna*, 1990: 276). We should notice in addition that de Brún here uses that powerful word *deoraí* (translating *phygōn*) precisely in its Old Irish legal meaning. Theoclymenos is indeed not just a wanderer but a 'person whose protection and rights have been restricted/forfeited.' It is a brilliant touch. When Theoclymenos refers to his kin being in pursuit (*a'm' thóraíocht*), the phrasing in turn opens up a whole world of other Irish tales, most famously the *Tóraíocht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* ('Pursuit of Diarmuid and Gráinne') in the Finn Cycle, known (if not quite beloved) by all Irish schoolchildren from its place in the elementary curriculum. The analogue at the same time leads us to recall that kin-slaying and subsequent pursuit are also a staple of Greek mythic tales, most spectacularly that of Orestes. Again, a shared generic interest (perhaps even Indo-European inheritance) generates similarity of action and diction.

The last item in my shortlist of resonating, institutionalized verbal genres is marked by the Irish term *caoineadh* that has made its way into English as 'keening', due to the distinctive features of the activity. Lament and its stylized performance of grief in these two tradition-permeated societies at either end of Europe have prompted a number of

literary and ethnographic studies. We think, for example, of Fiona Macintosh's 1993 book, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama*, as well as work by Patricia Lysaght (1997), Angela Bourke (1988) and Seán Ó Coileáin (1988) on the Irish side, and on the Greek, Nadia Seremetakis (1991), Gail Holst-Warhaft (1992) and Margaret Alexiou (2002), daughter of the classical Greek scholar and Irish-language enthusiast George Derwent Thomson.[6] The funeral of Hector is the moment for a full-scale performance of lament by his wife, mother and sister-in-law, at the end of the *Iliad*, a type of lament for which there are Irish parallels as I have discussed elsewhere (Martin 2003). At the end of the *Odyssey*, the remarkable divine performance of lament during the eighteen-day funeral of Achilles is recalled by the hero's comrades in Hades (*Od*. 24.60-2):

> And the Muses, all nine, replying to one another with sweet voices, led the dirge. There could you not have seen an Argive but was in tears, so deeply did the clear-toned Muse move their hearts.
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 417*

> *Chan Naoi mBéithe na ndán's uainíocht ar a chéile acu á déanamh*
> *Caoineadh; ní fheicfeá Airgíbheach ansin nárbh éigean dó deora*
> *A shilt, chomh mór san a chorraigh amhrán binn diachrach na mBéithe iad.*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 434–5*

With the phrase *uainíocht ar a chéile acu*, 'they were taking turns', de Brún captures the choral quality of the Muses taking turns in call-and-response fashion expressed by the Greek ἀμειβόμεναι, 'replying to one another', as they perform their *caoineadh*, although he does not vary their number in the interesting manner by which the *Odyssey* shifts to a singular Muse embodying the paradoxical unity and diversity of the group of keening women. In the Irish, both times it is given as plural (*Béithe na ndán; amhrán . . . na mBéithe*). Thanks to the memoir of de Brún's niece, the poet and Celtic scholar Máire Mhac an tSaoi, published under her married name Máire Cruise O'Brien, we know that de Brún personally experienced real keening, at least once, among his parishioners in Dunquin, Co. Kerry. She was there along with her uncle and describes how the female relatives of a dead young man, in paroxysms of grief, tore open their blouses to expose their breasts as they chanted the name of the deceased, alternating praise for him and reproaches that he had abandoned them (Cruise O'Brien 2004: 110–11). Such essential, informed contact with analogous living tradition places de Brún's translation in a different category from almost all other modern versions.

Verbal and generic texture

As we move further into discussing de Brún's evocations of established Irish literary genres, let me momentarily turn back to the archaeological metaphor. The Greek epic as we have it, dating perhaps from 650 BCE, is already the product of centuries of evolution

within a tradition of oral composition-in-performance.[7] The poem reveals this in its *Kunstsprache* of various dialect features, its grammatical forms both archaic and new and, most prominently, its extensive formulaic language. In addition, as we now see more clearly, the poem embeds an entire spectrum of smaller 'genres of speaking', some of which may even represent shorter genres pre-existing in hexameters, such as hymns, incantations and oracles (as Faraone 2021 persuasively argues).

Getting all those quirks of verbal and generic texture into English has never been attempted, to my knowledge, let alone accomplished. Thank God, you say – it might have been unreadable. In Modern Greek, the collaborative *Iliad* translation (dating from the early 1940s like de Brún's) by the novelist Nikos Kazantzakis and the philologist Ioannis Kakridis, *did* try to do something analogous by churning together expressions from every part of the Hellenic world, the more exotic the dialect-term the better. Native Greek speakers now speak of this translation with a combination of admiration and dismay.[8] The challenge for translators of Homer is how to reproduce or suggest deep poetic diachrony while maintaining a legible story line. In 2000, Stanley Lombardo began his appealingly bold translation of the *Odyssey* with the striking line 'Speak memory, Of the cunning hero, The wanderer.' Clearly he strove thereby to transpose into contemporary American English the effect of such literary layering, evoking cultural memories precisely when invoking Memory (mother of the Muses). But we might well wonder what an audience familiar with the memoirs of Vladimir Nabokov (bearing the title *Speak, Memory*) would make of Lombardo's allusion. Are we to transfer the modern touch to the ancient poem, to understand the author (or authoress) of the *Odyssey* as engaged in some sort of publicly-shared internal dialogue, in which it is the composer's *own* memory that is addressed, in the manner of the exiled Russian novelist?

Remarkably, the richness of a millennium of Irish literature enabled de Brún to rise to the challenge of poetic layering. We have already seen how one verbal droplet – the word *caioneadh*, 'keening' – could catalyze an entire literary effect by summoning associations. Similar effects, I suggest, are produced by de Brún's references to female figures, and handling of certain poetic phrases. Within both categories, my immediate goal is primarily to point out diction that echoes earlier poems. It may or may not involve conscious recall on the translator's part, or intertextual intent; simply being immersed in a particular rich poetic tradition might have led de Brún to choose words and images as he did. It is the overall effect, as well as some details of the localized production of meaningful resonances in a given line or passage, that interests me.

We might start where the poem starts, the invocation to the Muse (*Od*. 1.1-2):

> Tell me, Muse [*Mousa*], of the man of many devices, driven far astray after he had sacked the sacred [*hieron*] citadel of Troy.
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 13*

> *Eachtraigh, a Bhé bhinn, domsa ar an bhfear iltréitheach a thaistil,*
> *Mórán mór ar an bhfán tar éis Traí chlú-naofa do léirscrios.*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 1*

Presumably, de Brún could simply have imported Greek *Mousa* into Irish without difficulty. Gregory Darwin (2021) has shown recently how scores of Greek and Latin names *were* readily accommodated in early modern Irish verse, including the names of individual Muses (though not, as far as I can see, the actual word for 'Muse'). Instead, de Brún does something much more artful and resonant in rendering 'Mousa' with the vocative *a Bhé bhinn*, 'O sweet Woman'. It helps to recall, however, that the word *bé* is much more semantically constrained than the usual word for woman, *bean* (earlier *ben*). As the Indo-Europeanist Jay Jasanoff writes (1989: 135): 'Unlike *ben*, which is freely employed in all contexts where the meaning "woman" or "wife" is required, *bé* is a term of very restricted use, occurring mainly in poetic and legal language.' So, with the name 'sweet woman'– or 'blonde woman' if we include the occasional variant *bé find* – de Brún's poem attaches itself to a tradition almost as old as Irish literature itself.

Bé Bhinn in myth was the sister of Boand, the wife of Áed Alainn, and the mother of Froech, protagonist of the aforementioned *Táin Bó Froích*. In the Finn tales she is a beautiful giantess.[9] The name was widespread as well for Irish queens, including Brian Boru's mother and one of his daughters. Dáibhí Ó Bruadair has it in his poem 'The Triumph of Patrick Sarsfield': 'The son of Bé Bhinn is no longer among us who drove the fierce traitor hordes into the waves' (MacErlean 1917: 152–3). Earlier, we find it in verses in the *Duanaire Mhéig Uidhir* ('The Maguire Poembook'), praising a wife of Cú Chonnacht, the sixteenth-century lord of Fermanagh (Greene 1972: 99). In sum, the translation 'Muse' as *Bé Bhinn* evokes not just a divine woman who remembers, but the essence of *what is remembered*. This reference to a primeval and recurrent name in the literary tradition *turns into* a female metonymy for the tradition itself – as if one were to substitute *Mnēmosynē* (Memory) for *Mousa*. In this regard, it is worth noting a second innovatory touch in de Brún's opening: calling Troy *chlú-naofa* to translate the Greek *hieron*. Instead of just 'holy', this compound adjective is more like 'hallowed by tradition' (*clú* being the cognate for Greek poetic *kleos* that we have already seen at play in de Brún's text).

One can detect other such allusive plays in de Brún's use of epithets. I single out two for illustration. At *Odyssey* 1.44, Athena is called *glaukōpis*. The meaning of the Greek word, regularly attached to the goddess, is a perennial puzzle. Is it gleaming-eyed? Owl-eyed? Grey-eyed? Blue-eyed? Green-eyed? (see further Deacy 2016). In de Brún's version of this line, Athena becomes *diabhean Aitéine na súl glas* (1990: 2; 'goddess Athena of the *glas* eyes'). With this, we are definitely in the realm of colour, though Irish *glas* notoriously overlaps with at least three English hues. The electronic *Dictionary of the Irish Language* explains the term as 'descriptive of various shades of light green and blue, passing from grass-green to grey' (*s.v. glas*). More important is the echo of Irish tradition. Compare O'Carolan's compliment to a woman patron: *Maighre na súl glas, péarla na lúb cas* ('Mary with the grey-green eyes, pearl with the looping curls'; cf. Ó Máille 1916: 152). The eighteenth-century harper's highly conventional praises of women are easily paralleled throughout the period.

A comparison of de Brún's next epithetic adaptation with such wider poetic strategies brings the precise generic source for the translator's choices into tighter focus, however.

Compare the Greek of *Odyssey* 9.29, where the divine nymph Calypso is called *dia theāōn* ('divine [or 'shining'] one among goddesses'), with the Irish translation *Calapsó réilteann na ndiabhan* (de Brún 1990: 148). This phrase, 'star of goddesses', echoes a praise trope found throughout Aodhagán Ó Rathaille's work, as in his poem for the famous beauty Lucy Fitzgerald of Ballykennely, Co. Cork: *is péarlach a dearca, mar réilteann na maiden*, 'pearls her eyes, like the morning star' (see Dinneen 1900: 160, poem 29, line 11). The same image was deployed by Fear Flatha Ó Gnímh a century earlier, who says of Eileen, the object of his praise, *áille ná réilteann tú* – 'you are more beautiful than a star'.[10] There are no stars in Homer's eyes or his epithets. In the Irish, the starring or starry woman is, of course, the centrepiece of the genre known as *aisling*, or vision poetry (see also Ó Liatháin, Chapter 11: 191–5, this volume). De Brún, in short, aims at evoking all the sensations of that hugely popular poetic form when he chooses these phrases. And, in mythopoeic mode, it fits: nympholepsy – the ancient Greek belief that one can be struck almost to the point of death by the vision of a nymph – would be a good description not just of what Odysseus might face on Calypso's isle, but of the plot of many an *aisling* poem. (In medieval protoforms of the later *aisling*, like *Serglige Con Culainn* ('The Wasting Sickness of Cú Chulainn'), life-threatening encounters with vision-women are the norm.)

With the *aisling* genre in mind, finally, thanks to de Brún, we can obtain a different vision of Odysseus' encounter with the Phaeacian princess Nausicaa on the beach where he has washed up. Buck-naked but for a strategically-placed stick, the brine-encrusted hero pours forth a suppliant speech that would in other circumstances sound like a pick-up line (*Od*. 6.149-52):

> 'I clasp your knees, my queen [ἄνασσα] – are you a goddess, or are you mortal? [θεός νύ τις, ἦ βροτός ἐσσι]. If you are a goddess, one of those who hold broad heaven, to Artemis, the daughter of great Zeus, I liken you most nearly in looks and in stature and in form.'
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 231*

> *Féach ar mo ghlúine mé, a Réilteann, i t'fhianaise! An dia tú nó duine?*
> *Más dia tusa de dhéithibh a mhaireas sa bhfairsinge spéirghil,*
> *Is í gurbh uirthi ba thúisce do chuimhneoinn, Artaimís fiagaí,*
> *Maighdean's iníon Shéis mhóir, ar a gné agus a toise is a déanamh.*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 106*

De Brún dials us into the relevant genre with the vocative *a Réilteann* – his Nausicaa is a star, not a queen – while his question, *An dia tú nó duine*?, has a nice alliterative ring not present in the Greek. To underline my point that this is all *aisling* talk, and meant to evoke those redolent scenarios, I offer a final comparison from the master of the genre, Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, with his more florid recollection of a dream-maiden:

> *Aitchim den néamh-ghein freagra cóir,*
> *An d'aicme na ndéithe a tréad nó an treabha den*
> *Dréim chirt daonna ó'r eascair a pór.*

I ask the lustrous being for a true answer,
Is her race of the nature of the gods, or is it from the tribe of
The true human crowd that her kin descended from.

Muldowney 2002: 17–18

Vocabulary from Irish tradition

Before moving to my final category – the verbal brushstrokes that evoke Irish tradition but *not* always one particular genre – a footnote is called for. One might imagine de Brún being tempted to pluck phrases from a version of the *Odyssey* that already existed in Irish, the Middle Irish tale entitled *Merugud Uilixis maicc Leirtis*, 'The Wandering of Ulysses son of Laertes'. It is highly likely, after all, that he knew Kuno Meyer's 1886 edition and translation (as James Joyce probably did, too; on Joyce's *Ulysses*, see also Crowley and Ward, Chapters 15 and 16 respectively, this volume). But not only would such an antiquarian urge be quite foreign to the Monsignor's overall approach (in which he is the opposite of the ersatz scholar Joyce). Even if he had wanted to, it would be near impossible, given that the *Merugud* is such a far distant cousin to the original Greek epic both in its length and form; it is a short prose text of fewer than 300 lines, and its content deviates significantly from the small number of Homeric episodes it rewrites (see Hillers 2024 and 1992). Calling his protagonist Odaiséas, rather than some form of Ulysses, stakes out de Brún's affinities pretty clearly – his hero is not the folktale figure of the *Merugud*, any more than the Greek poem's faithful but melodramatically moribund dog Argus resembles the multicoloured giant hound who brings about the recognition of Uilix (with lots of face licking) in the medieval story. As it is, I find only a single phrase shared between the *Merugud* and de Brún's translation – the entirely commonplace 'great sea' (*mara móir* at *Merugud* 12), which is surely a mere coincidence. Citing this, I want to fend off a possible objection that what follows are just examples of Irish ways of saying certain things, so that echoes in de Brún that I claim to find in earlier works would be simply similar accidents. My defence is twofold: that the phraseology involved is already poetic, namely troped language or uncommon combinations, and that the contexts evoked are similar, Greek to Irish. The argument at this stage now descends into a welter of details.

First, there are some superficial features that get us into the mood for hearing echoes of tradition, whether through alliteration or interjection. The alliterative style well captures the complex sound-patterning of such passages as *Odyssey* 5.157-8:

δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων.
πόντον ἐπ᾽ ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

. . . racking his heart with tears and groans and griefs, and he would look out over the unresting sea, shedding tears.

trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 193

Compare the play on *d*- and *l*-sounds, along with assonance, in de Brún (1990: 87):

Agus a chroí á bhriseadh le síorolagón agus léanta,
Is fairsinge an tsáile ina radharc agus deora go deo lena leacain.

Familiar as it is from prose sagas and medieval Irish texts like *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 'The Wanderings of Aeneas', based closely on Virgil's *Aeneid*, and therefore good for creating a general 'epic' buzz, alliteration in de Brún's hands is further enriched by the sort of sound patterning one finds in bardic compositions. Thus, *síorolagón agus léanta* echoes in the next line's end-phrase, *deora go deo lena leacain*.[11] At another point, interjection in Irish serves de Brún as the functional equivalent of alliteration in Greek when it comes to the expression of intense emotion. For instance, an unusual alliterative string marks Athena's heartfelt opening appeal that Zeus spare her favourite hero (*Od*. 1.48-9):

ἀλλά μοι ἀμφ᾽ Ὀδυσῆι δαΐφρονι δαίεται ἦτορ,
δυσμόρῳ, ὃς δὴ δηθὰ φίλων ἄπο πήματα πάσχει

But my heart is torn for wise Odysseus, ill-fated man [*dusmorōi*], who far from his friends has long been suffering woes . . .

trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 17

Ach is i dtaobh Odaiséis ardmheabhraigh atáimse go buartha
Fada don laoch seo, mo dhiachair, ag fulang i gcéin óna mhuintir

de Brún 1990: 2

When de Brún interjects *mo dhiachair* ('alas, my sorrow'), he is not trying to capture the alliteration in the Greek passage, but instead extracts and elevates to a cry of despair the semantic content of the descriptive adjective *dusmorōi* ('ill-fated man') that has been so noticeably set off by such repetitions of sound in the Greek (including the central syllable in the very name *O-dus-seus*). The particular interjection is used in earlier poetic tradition – for instance, by Seán na Raithíneach Ó Murchadha in an elegy for Capt. James Lavallin from around 1750: *Mo dhiachair, cé riarfas na fíorbhoicht* ('My sorrow – who will provide for the truly poor?'; Ó Donnchadha 1954: 313). Overtones of lament, evoked by de Brún's diction, are entirely fitting for this moment in the *Odyssey*. Conventions of lament and tears in earlier Irish poetry also may affect de Brún's rendition of the way Eumaeus greets his young master Telemachus, returning from his narrow escape from death at the hands of the suitors (*Od*. 16.14-16):

And he went to meet his lord, and kissed his head and both his beautiful eyes and his two hands, and a big tear fell from him . . .

trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 119

Faoi dhéin a ógthiarna do chuaigh sé
Is phóg sé go dilis ar a éadan's ar dhá shúil álainne a chinn é,
Is phóg ansin a dhá láimh, agus deora go fuíoch aige á sileadh.

de Brún 1990: 289

The underlined phrase, meaning 'his tears flowing copiously', recalls the copious flow of tears similarly described in a verse prayer by the early nineteenth-century poet Seán Ó Braonáin from north Kerry: *tré chumha a chionta go siltear go fuíoch déara*, 'through lamenting his transgressions may tears flow copiously' (de Brún 1972: 112).

If these details resemble small brushstrokes, the next few examples provide slightly broader touches. All three have to do with description and rely on phrases or compounds that seem already frozen in use. I suspect we have to deal here with the level of diction tracked in several publications in the 1960s by Kevin O'Nolan (classicist brother of the comic genius Brian), who pointed out the formulaic quality of Irish folk-tale phrasings, and compared them with Homeric usage (O'Nolan 1968 and 1969). De Brún is, in effect, discovering congruent formulas in Irish for those he senses as repeated diction in Greek. For instance, 'fine clothes' [εἵματα καλά] appears as a formula six times, always line-final, in the *Odyssey*. It occurs this way when Odysseus, having landed at last in Ithaca, tots up his loot (*Od*. 13.217-20):

So he spoke, and set himself to counting the beautiful tripods, and the cauldrons, and the gold, and the beautiful woven clothing [ὑφαντά τε εἵματα καλά].

trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 19

Dúirt seisean amhlaidh, is chrom ar gach coire agus trípéad a chomhaireamh,
Agus a raibh aige d'ór agus d'éadaí fite go hálainn.

de Brún 1990: 239

De Brún works into his translation the otherwise non-formulaic adjective ὑφαντά ('woven') and comes out with the phrase *d'éadaí fite go hálainn* ('clothes beautifully woven'). He may have in mind a 'formulaic' Irish combination such as one finds employed by the Meath poet Aodh Mac Domhnaill (*c.* 1850): *Ar leaba chlúmhach éan, faoi* éadach fite *den tsról*, 'On a bird-feather bed, under cloth woven of satin' (Beckett 1987: 20).

In another instance (*Od*. 18.295-6), a sun-bright gold chain strung with amber beads [ἠλέκτροισιν ἐερμένον], presented to Penelope by one of her suitors, is rendered with the phrase *clocha ómra air* ('amber stones upon it'; de Brún 1990: 339). This echoes an adjective for 'amber-studded' already gracing a version of the early modern Ossianic tale *The Battle of Ventry*, namely *cathbhárr clochómrach*, 'helmet studded with amber' (Meyer 1885: 66 (line 264), a variant from Egerton 149). The simplex form *ómrach*, 'amber', is quite frequent in poems describing women, by Pádraigín Haicéad, Aodhagán Ó Rathaille and Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin, so de Brún – who clearly favoured the language of local Munster poets in translating – may have had these, too, in mind.[12]

Third in this set of semi-formulaic touches is a striking phrase that illuminates de Brún's version of that *locus amoenus*, the peak of Mt Olympus (*Od*. 6.43-5):

> Neither is it shaken by winds nor ever wet with rain, nor does snow fall upon it, but the air is outspread clear [*aithrē*] and cloudless, and over it hovers a radiant whiteness [*aiglē*]
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 223*

> *Is ná bíonn gaoth á shuaitheadh go deo ná fearthain anuas air*
> *Is ná gaibheann sneachta ina leith; os a chionn tá fairsinge spéire*
> *leata gan scamaill is gile na gile ina thimpeall i gcónaí.*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 102*

Windless and weatherless, the gods' dwelling is filled with clear air and radiance, *aithrē* and *aiglē* in the Greek, a near-rhyming line-final pair with a sound effect bards would surely appreciate. How does de Brún capture this sublimity? For the latter word he doubles up, producing an exact sound-repetition, and a highly resonant one: *gile na gile ina thimpeall i gcónaí*, 'brightness most bright forever roundabout'. The phrasing must surely evoke the opening lines of the most famous *aisling* poem by Ó Rathaille:

> *Gile na gile do chonnarc ar slí in uaigneas*
> *Criostal an chriostail a goirmroisc rinn-uaine . . .*
>
> Brightness most bright, I beheld on the way, forlorn,
> Crystal of crystal her eye, blue touched with green.
>
> *trans. Kinsella in Ó Tuama 1981: 151*

Once again, the diction and details of the vision-poems colour de Brún's imagination, especially in this episode centred on Nausicaa – even when what is described is not a young maiden but the divine home to which Athena ascends.

Thanks to the wide span of Irish poetic modes, the translation manages to replicate the tonal range of the original, from lyric delicacy (as in the moments just seen) to scenes of verbal abuse – what in Greek would fall under the generic heading of *iambos*, as practised by the early poets Archilochus and Hipponax, and transformed in the fifth century BCE by their devotee, the comic dramatist Aristophanes (see further Rosen 2007). Satire and abuse constituted a long-lived genre in Irish, one attested from an early period onward. The powers of the Irish satirist to disfigure and even kill his victim, along with the usual extortionist threats to the poet's patrons, are well known (see McLaughlin 2008, with further bibliography). Quite rightly, de Brún zeroes in on precisely this analogous genre when he renders some choice sections of *iambos* embedded in the *Odyssey*. For instance, when Athena describes the cunning of Odysseus, she gives a eulogistic spin to words that normally would be insulting (*Od*. 13.291-5):

> 'Cunning must he be, and stealthy, who would go beyond you in all kinds of guile, even if it were a god who met you. Stubborn man, crafty in counsel, insatiate in deceit, not even in your own land, it seems, were you to cease from guile and deceitful tales, which you love from the bottom of your heart . . .'
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 23*

> *'Bheadh sé ina rógaire chliste is 'na ghadaí shleamhain, an té a bhéarfadh*
> *Barr gach saghas camadaíle uait féin, fiú amháin is gur diacht é.*
> *Síorchumadóir thú ná beadh lán boilg de chleasa go deo agat!*
> *Teacht ar do dhúchas thar n-ais, is gan cuimhneamh id' cheann ach ar rudaí*
> *A thaitin leat ó bhís beag, eachtraí píoráitithe is bréaga! . . .'*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 242*

Surprisingly, three of the words de Brún uses to capture this passage (underlined above) show up within a few lines of one another in an anonymous bardic poem (*c.* 1600) on Nioclás Dall the blind harper of Rattoo (Bergin 1970: 198): 'Framer of mystic feats [*cumadóir na ccleas ndoilbhthe*] thief of the winter night [*gaduidhe na geamhoidhche*].' Even more interesting is the parallel in the respective discursive contexts, for the Irish terms of abuse, like Athena's Greek, are used precisely to *praise* the subject.

No such epainetic intent, on the other hand, lies beneath the stream of abuse from Melanthius, the evil goatherd, at his meeting with Odysseus and the good servant, Eumaeus (*Od*. 17.219-20):

> Whither, pray, are you leading this filthy glutton, you miserable swineherd, this nuisance of a beggar to spoil our feasts?
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 171*

> *Cá bhfuil an slogaire seo agat á sheoladh, a mhucaoire na mallacht,*
> *Cráiteoir bacaigh a ceapadh le bheith ina phláigh ar na féastaí.*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 314*

Here, too, the Irish insult tradition dealt de Brún plenty to work with, as 'filthy glutton' turns into *slogaire*, 'swallower' (i.e., 'glutton') and the feast-defiling bum becomes *pláigh ar na féastaí*, 'a plague on feasts'. Such choice words come up, to take just two instances, in the satire tradition as practised by Ó Rathaille. We hear of 'A slender hunchback, a greasy swallower [*slogaire smeartha*], who swallows every rubbish into his greedy maw' (in Dinneen 1900: 222–3), and of 'A plague [*pláigh*] on their company, without refuge or roof' (Ó Conchubhair in Ní Dhonnchadha 1953: 20).

We might turn finally to two passages where de Brún could draw on traditional verses that incorporated an even older, indeed primeval, theme in Irish culture, the power of poetry and the poet–patron bond. This layering effect in his translation takes the audience beyond surface diction to the underlying social institutions that were shared by the cognate aristocratic systems of archaic Greece and Ireland. The all-permeating theme

can be accessed easily through the motif-index of the Dublin Institute's indispensable Bardic Poetry Database (bardic.celt.dias.ie). Again, rather than analysing in any detail this symbiosis of *laudandus* and *laudator* and its role in keeping cosmic and social order, I will simply point to the poetic touches that de Brún uses to evoke its abiding reality.

Aptly, in rendering the praises that Odysseus in Book 8 directs toward the court singer Demodocus, de Brún resorts to diction found in a poem of praise by Seán Ó Murchadha, the chief of the Court of Poetry at early eighteenth-century Whitechurch (near Blarney), in which he praises the bard Dáibhí Ó Bruadair, associated with that court about a generation earlier. Both the Greek and Irish bards are singled out for talent, the *féith*, 'talent', of poetry (*Od*. 8.496-8):

> If you indeed tell me this tale rightly, I will declare to all mankind that the god has with a ready heart granted you the gift of divine song [*thespin aoidēn*].
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 309*

> *Neosfadsa i láthair an tsaoil agus fágfad ag daoine mar chlú ort*
> *Féith na filíochta ó neamh gur mheasc dia fabhrach id' dhúchas.*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 144*

The line echoes Ó Murchadha's verse *Díodhacht is dán binn, deárscnaigheacht, eagna réil, / is gaois gan fagháil tsíos, fáidhíocht fabhar is féith*, 'Divinity and sweet verse, generosity, bright wisdom, and wit without crushing down, prophetic power, favor, and talent' (Ó Murchadha 1719: 274, Historical Irish Corpus, corpas.ria.ie).

The favour of a god gave this gift to Demodocus, while Ó Bruadair is praised for *fáidhíocht fabhar*, 'prophetic power [and] favour'. We are in the same mental space in eighteenth-century Cork as that occupied by the notion of *thespis aoidos* in archaic Greece. In both contexts, poets are also seers. The word *fáith*, as has often been pointed out, is cognate with Latin *vates*, 'inspired singer/prophet,' the term that became a key concept in a self-consciously archaizing Augustan poetics.[13]

In line with this volume's theme of migration, it is not amiss to point out that the cited poem by Sean Ó Murchadha had its own remarkable diasporic tale. The notebook containing it (now National Library of Ireland MS G 321) was discovered only in 1938 in a house in western Massachusetts about to be flooded for the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir near Springfield.[14] A descendant of the poet must have taken it along when emigrating from Ireland years before. The discovery and repatriation of the manuscript made the Irish news (e.g., *Cork Examiner*, Saturday, 18 March 1939: 13).[15] The fate of Ó Murchadha's *libellus* is thus a wry variation on the worldwide fame that Odysseus promises *his* poet. I call Demodocus 'his', for in the *Odyssey*'s compact portrayal of a poet–patron relationship, this singer gives us the song of Odysseus and his victorious stratagem of the Trojan Horse at the hero's own prompting (*Od*. 9.492-5). Let us not forget, however, that Odysseus, too, is a poet. As described by his swineherd Eumaeus, he narrates his adventures just like an *aoidos* – the same word as has designated the local court-performer Demodocus (*Od*. 17.513-19):

> I would, queen, that the Achaeans would keep silence, for he speaks such words [μυθεῖται] as would charm your very soul [θέλγοιτο]. Three nights I had him by me, and three days I kept him in my hut, for to me first he came when he fled by stealth from a ship, but he had not yet ended the tale of his sufferings. Just as when a man gazes upon a minstrel [*aoidon*] who sings to mortals songs of longing [ἔπε' ἱμερόεντα] that the gods have taught him, and their desire to hear him has no end, whenever he sings, even so he charmed me when he sat in my hall.
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 193*

> *Chuirfeadh an duine sin draíocht ar do chroí leis na heachtraithe atá aige.*
> *Bhí sé ar feadh trí lá is tri n-oíche á choimeád agam féinig*
> *Thall im' bhothán, mar do tháinig sé chugam tar éis éalaithe as bád dó.*
> *Is ní raibh deireadh aige fós leis na léanta do bhí aige le hinsint*
> *Amhail is a bítear ag féachaint ar fhile, ó dhéithe a bhfuil bua aige*
> *Chun croí daoine do leá leis na véarsaí álainne a deir sé.*
>
> *de Brún 1990: 324*

De Brún's translation does not have to reach far for the trope of the poetry of the *file*, 'poet', as druidic magic (*draíocht*). Compare, for example, the lines from Donncha Rua Mac Conmara (1810): *Gaibh go dána do dhánta draoidheacht dó; / Ó's feasach gur seancha(í) fíor thu*, 'Take boldly your druidic arts [or 'magic poetry'] to him, since it is well-known you are a true keeper of lore' (Ó Foghludha 1933: 55–6; on Donncha Rua, see further Ó Liatháin, Chapter 11, this volume). The elision of roles is common in the earlier bardic imaginary as well.[16]

The exalted status of the poet correlates with the sacral quality of early Irish and Greek kingship. In Indo-European ideology, evident from such early corpora as the Vedic hymns and the Avestan Gathas, proclaiming the just character of his patron is not simply an act of flattery on the part of the praise-poet, but a necessity for ensuring the continued good order of the cosmos. A suspenseful moment in the *Odyssey* (the disguised hero's dialogue with his wife) conspicuously affirms the doctrine of regal power (*Od.* 19.107-14):

> 'Lady, no one among mortals upon the boundless earth could find fault with you, for your fame goes up to the broad heaven, as does the fame of some blameless king, who, with the fear of the gods in his heart, is lord over many valiant men, upholding justice ; and the black earth bears wheat and barley, and the trees are laden with fruit, the flocks bring forth young unceasingly, and the sea yields fish, all from his good leading; and the people prosper under him.'
>
> *trans. Murray and Dimock 1995: 243*

The lush abundance in the last lines is captured in diction directly comparable to bardic praise of royal patrons:

Is eisean ag cloí leis an gceart, is go dtugann an talamh go torthúil
Eorna is cruithneacht [barley and wheat], is go mbíonn meas [fruit/mast] aibí ina ualach ar chrannaibh.
Uan ag an gcaora agus gamhain ag an mbó, agus i gciúnas na mara
Iasc [fish] ina ráthanna ar fáil, is a mhuintir go saibhir ag gnóthú.

de Brún 1990: 348

Some lines in the seventeenth-century Contention of the Bards offer an analogue:

Ré linn ba soinnmheach síona
d'eighreacht ré linn dá shíola
ioth is bliocht iasg agus meas
do bhíodh do ghnáth na bhflaitheas.

'In their day the seasons were prosperous being assigned to them as a birth-right in their day Corn and milk fish and fruit were abundant in their reign.'

McKenna 1918: 142

Similar imagery occurs in Séamus Ó Doraidhin's lines praising Sliabh Liag: '*Bídh eorna 'na cruachaibh ann, cruithneacht 'na dualaibh, / Cáise buidhe, uachtar, agus luachair bhog ag fás*' ('There will be barley in stacks, wheat in sheaves, / Yellow cheese, cream, and soft rushes growing'; see Ó Muirgheasa 1934: 402). But the most venerable expression of the idea dates back much earlier, to the seventh-century wisdom text *Audacht Morainn* ('The Testament of Morann'):

17. It is through the truth of the ruler that abundances of great tree-fruit of the great wood are tasted.

18. It is through the truth of the ruler that milk-yields of great cattle are maintained.

19. It is through the truth of the ruler that there is abundance of every high, tall corn.

20. It is through the truth of the ruler that abundance of fish swim in streams.

21. It is through the truth of the ruler that fair children are well begotten.[17]

Pádraig de Brún and the *Odyssey*: a concluding coda

With this last glimpse of king and poet (Odysseus being one and the same), I turn now to the biographical coda, which I perhaps somewhat meretriciously headlined 'auto-fiction'. How, as translator, could Monsignor Pádraig de Brún write himself backwards into a canonical Greek epic? At one level, the very fact that he chose to translate the *Odyssey* testifies to an elective affinity. Another twentieth-century translator of the

Odyssey, T. E. Lawrence ('of Arabia') made his own affiliation explicit, recognizing in the poem moments of heroism and terror like those he had known as a guerilla fighter: 'I have hunted wild boars and watched wild lions, sailed the Aegean (and sailed ships), bent bows, lived with pastoral peoples, woven textiles, built boats and killed many men. So I have odd knowledges that qualify me to understand the *Odyssey*, and odd experiences that interpret it to me . . .' (quoted in Knox 1991: 19). The Monsignor is not known to have slain anyone, but he did do his share of sailing and hunting; he travelled widely, having spent years of study in Göttingen and Paris, and had a wide circle of acquaintances, from John Betjeman to Erwin Schrödinger. Associated with major figures in the Republican movement, he had as high school teacher of mathematics the future President of Ireland, Éamon de Valera (de Brún himself became an internationally recognized mathematician) and his closest friend was Seán MacDiarmada, whom de Brún visited in Kilmainham jail shortly before the revolutionary leader's execution in May 1916. De Brún's most famous poem in English was his elegy 'In Memoriam' on four men who had opposed the Anglo-Irish treaty and were executed by the Free State in December 1922 (de Brún himself had been on the anti-treaty side of the Irish Civil War). His sister Margaret married the Fianna Fáil politician Seán MacEntee. Their daughter, Máire Mhac an tSaoi, had a long life (she died in October 2021, aged ninety-nine) working as Celticist, poet and translator, not unlike her uncle. De Brún was a professor at Maynooth, then president of University College Galway, then chairman of the Arts Council.[18] To call him by Odysseus' Homeric epithet *polutropos* – a man of many turnings – would seem an understatement. De Brún was himself truly Odyssean. No wonder he was drawn to the epic.

One might resist my autofiction musings by reference to the obvious fact that the *Odyssey* was not de Brún's only translation. Did he also feel a personal affinity with Antigone, Oedipus and Iphigenia (tragedies about whom he translated from Greek to Irish)? With Louis Aragon or Corneille? Should we view his version of Dante's *Inferno* as another autofiction? And his *Iliad* (still unpublished)?[19] I could dodge such objections by resorting to metaphor, saying that de Brún 'migrated' into other minds, taking on various personae in his translations, like his close contemporary the poet Ezra Pound, another Odyssean figure. But more seriously, I find de Brún to be especially Odyssean in two ways, at least one of which I would argue *is* reflected in the translation.

First, he was for some time an outsider, however odd that label might seem. Are we talking about the imposing man who hobnobbed with de Valera and the astronomer Fred Hoyle? A Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor, whom Lady Gregory on her deathbed praised for his Irish *Life of Christ* – her consolatory reading at the time – and made Yeats transmit to him her gratitude? At least in the period after the Civil War, de Brún would seem to have become the ultimate *insider* – no *deoraí*, he.

But there is the other, younger man, who spent as much time as possible in the small house he had built in Dunquin, Co. Kerry, a far western place (think Ithaca), next parish to America, his main companions there, farmers, fishermen and family. From that marginalized perspective, he made his famous plea (in March 1930 in the journal *Humanitas*) that the Irish language should look outward, and that Irish literature should

lay claim at last to the heritage of Renaissance humanism. That view, if anything, made him all the more an outsider. In the next issue of the journal, the dramatist, critic and all-round reactionary Daniel Corkery denounced de Brún's cosmopolitan approach, arguing instead that Ireland should hold itself pure and aloof from such corrupting Continental influences.[20] One could hazard a guess that in such an atmosphere, the decision to translate the *Odyssey* was a liberating rebuttal by de Brún. Through it, he could vividly imagine a man from a small place who managed to see the wide world and was the wiser, if not richer, for it. It is a mode of encountering life that one can perceive in other modernist Odysseans, from Cavafy and Seferis to Joyce and Walcott.[21] As if to put the seal on his outsider status, however, the translation finished in the 1940s was rejected by the Irish-language publishing house Sáirséal agus Dill. The Monsignor was asked: who would ever read it? Better to stick with tales of the western peasantry, it seemed (Cruise O'Brien 2004: 102–3). In the increasingly cramped and provincial intellectual landscape of Ireland in that era, a world-spanning hero was simply not the right paradigm.

It was in his small house, Tigh na Cille, at Dunquin, that de Brún came to embody the other quality that I find resonating with the figure of Odysseus as depicted in Homer. In a number of scenes, we see Odysseus the poet recomposing his life as he interacts with his audience. He does so almost obsessively when narrating fictionalized versions of himself throughout the second half of the poem. The five extended lies he tells in which he becomes a Cretan, or a kidnapping victim, or a murderer in flight all contain 'real' touches and diction from his 'real' adventures (if they, too, are not in fact another extended fiction, performed with poetic brio in Books 9–12 of the poem; see further Trahman 1952). As for that extended narration, Odysseus ostensibly performs it all in close interaction with the audience of Phaeacians, overtly varying the pace and detail of his tale to suit them in terms of genders and interests. Think of how Odysseus handles the Underworld narration for instance, like a seasoned oral performer playing to and playing on his listeners' desires to hear about famous men and women now dead.

I hope to have suggested by the detailed dictional parallels offered above that de Brún, too, recomposed – 'sampled' as it were (to use the terms of hip-hop verbal art) – a wealth of earlier poetic performances, from which he culled choice phrases and associations to deepen his audience's feeling for his poem. He is reputed to have been able to recite from memory much of Ó Rathaille and Ó Bruadair (Cruise O'Brien 2004: 103). Remarkably, de Brún's poetic translation was just as much a composition-in-performance. As his niece describes the process, de Brún would work through some Homeric lines in the chapel vestry after saying his daily Mass. Then, each evening, neighbours would gather in the house in Dunquin and (over a few bottles of stout) listen to de Brún recite in a loud voice the parts he had translated into Irish that day, whereupon each contributed opinions as to the aptness of phrase. 'The company would subject his version to searching and salutary linguistic criticism, driving home their points with quotation and anecdote', as his niece reports (Cruise O'Brien 2004: 95). De Brún, of course, was not a native Irish speaker. He had studied basic grammar as a child but only devoted himself to the language on an epiphanic journey to Dingle following the execution of his friend

MacDiarmada. One wonders whether the fine Munster poetic phrases that pop up in *An Odaisé* were his or his neighbours' – for we know from the aforementioned Daniel Corkery (in his *Hidden Ireland*) that ordinary people living close to Dingle could not only recite by heart but also vary the wording of *aisling* poems to create new verses that suited their present situation during the First World War (Corkery 1967: 135). There are few if any more moving scenes of truly collaborative creation shared by poet and community than that of de Brún declaiming nightly in Dunquin. It warms the Homerist's heart.

But rather than start my own autofiction here, let the last word come from Marcus Mac Conghail, a musician and one of the edgiest Irish poets on the current scene. In 2016 he was asked by the editors of *The Poetry Ireland Review*, 'If you could die and come back as a poem, what poem would it be?' Mac Conghail replied: 'An Odaisé' – an t-aistriúchán iontach a dhein Pádraig de Brún' ('*An Odaisé*' – the wonderful translation that Pádraig de Brún made'; Mac Conghail 2016: 81). Such a bridging of generations makes me feel that the Odyssean Paddy Browne/Pádraig de Brún, simultaneously cosmopolitan outsider and indigenous insider, has finally found the homecoming (*nostos*) he deserves.

Notes

1. On this and related themes in the *Odyssey*, see Dougherty 2019; on treatments of Homeric epic that touch on migration among other contemporary topics, see Hauser 2019.
2. For specific textual attestations, see *eDIL* 2019: *s.v. deorad.*
3. Prose translation is from the Loeb Classical Library edition in two volumes (with non-continuous pagination).
4. Cf. Helen recalling her past (*Il*. 3.180), Priam recalling Hector (*Il*. 24.426), Telemachus (*Od*. 15.268) and Penelope (*Od*. 19.315) of Odysseus.
5. On the importance of this passage and of *kleos* throughout Greek hexameter poetry, see G. Nagy 1999; for *kleos* in the *Odyssey*, see Petropoulos 2011.
6. On ways in which Greek and Irish lament poetics continue archaic Indo-European traditions, see Bozzone 2016.
7. On questions of date, composition and style, the essays in Pache et al. (2020) provide the most reliable recent assessments.
8. On the dynamics of such 'intralingual' translation within a complex poetic tradition, see the essay by Maronitis 2008, a brilliant translator of Homer into Modern Greek.
9. The etymology and development of the name is exhaustively examined by Meid 2009: 75–6.
10. In de Brún et al. 1971: 64. The full line shows his classicizing touch as the addressee is compared to Venus and Helen: *Is breátha ná Vénus tú, is áille ná réilteann tú, mo Hélen gan bhéim is tú, a Eibhlín, a rún!*
11. Given differences in vowel quantity and consonant class, of course, these line-ends do not qualify as rhymes by the strict conventions of bardic *dán direach*.
12. Compare, for instance, the 'eyebrows without flaw like amber' of a vision maiden in Ó Súilleabháin's poem *Ceo draoidheachta* (Muldowney 2002: 126).

13. See *wāti-* ('sooth-sayer, prophet') in Matasović 2009: 404. On *vates*, see Newman 1967.
14. The city was a common destination for Irish emigrants: the family of my grand-aunt Agnes Cusack Daly moved there from Clare in the late nineteenth century.
15. Fuller details of the importance of the manuscript are in Ó Donnchadha 1954: xxviii–xxx.
16. See poems connected with Motif #111 in the Bardic Poetry Database ('Allusions to druidic attributes or symbols of privileged character of poets').
17. Text from Kelly 1976; on further archaic Greek connections, see Martin 1984; on the Indo-European background, see Watkins 1979.
18. For a concise overview of his life, see the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* entry by Lawrence White (https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.002457.v1). A more detailed account of his involvement with Irish is given by Diarmuid Breathnach Máire Ní Mhurchú at https://www.ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=420.
19. On de Brún as translator, see the appreciative remarks of Ó Coigligh (2014). There has not been, to my knowledge, any more extended study of his technique or the poetic results.
20. On the controversy, see Titley 2005: 313–14.
21. It is emblematic that Yeats, by contrast with these, sought refuge in the opposite direction, imagining an ideal life (and audience) in the shape of a Connemara fisherman, 'A man who does not exist, A man who is but a dream' (from 'The Fisherman', 1916).

CHAPTER 15
READERS ON THE MOVE: MIGRANT SUBSCRIBERS TO JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

Ronan Crowley

They're a varied bunch, the subscribers to the first printing of Joyce's *Ulysses*. The order books that Sylvia Beach compiled as publisher record names and addresses for hundreds upon hundreds of buyers and prospective buyers from all walks of *entre deux guerres* life: writers, artists and creatives working in all mediums; statesmen and revolutionaries; Zionists, Ulster Unionists and hundred-percenters; titled aristos and the newly moneyed; socialites, socialists and salonnières; suffragettes, spiritualists and sexologists; tastemakers and dressmakers and window dressers and rural revivalists; architects and admen, bibliophiles, clergymen and civil servants, diplomats, economists, heiresses, industrialists and investment bankers, journalists, KBEs and knights bachelor, librarians, mathematicians, Oxbridgers, parliamentarians and pornographers and – for all this specificity – still far too many Joe and Jane Bloggses whose social identities are apparently irrecoverable from the archives of unevenly preserved, unevenly digitized historical records. Critics have made attempts to type or to classify this miscellaneous slice of the book-buying world *c*. 1922, but this chapter focuses on one heretofore unacknowledged trait that many of these people had in common: a disproportionate number of subscribers to the *Ulysses* first printing were migrants.

Even before the novel appeared on 2 February 1922, Joyce's fortieth birthday, the rhetoric of imminent publication had a distinctly migrational edge: for Valery Larbaud, an influential, early waymaker, *Ulysses* put Ireland on the verge of 'une rentrée sensationnelle' or sensational re-entry into European literature (1922: 389). This metaphor of bookish internal-European migration was delivered to a crowded house in the Maison des Amis des Livres bookshop in December 1921 before circulating widely, and it picked up on the ongoing phenomenon of wartime population displacement, which had left millions of people – the Joyce family among them – uprooted and relocated within Continental Europe and across the world. And yet, even as early critics praised or excoriated *Ulysses* for its traversal of all sorts of cultural barriers and boundaries, the physical book object itself had to negotiate redefined national and supranational borders and to traverse shifting frontiers, whether in the hands of its first readers or to reach them. This chapter brings archival research and cultural history to bear on the loose group of transnational migrants who acquired copies of the *Ulysses* first printing. In recovering their stories, it examines the intersections of migration with conspicuous cultural consumption in the immediate post-First World War period to explore how the backgrounds and lived experiences of these first buyers and giftees shaped their interest in Joyce and the novel and, in some cases, returned them to the classical literature he had drawn on.

Astrid Erll has argued that the classical inheritance is itself on the move, that narratives like the *Odyssey* reach audiences not in 'a single leap from antiquity to modernity, but through long travels across time and space … movements along unscripted routes' (2024: 34; cf. Martin, Chapter 14, this volume, on the Irish linguistic and cultural infusions in de Brún's *An Odaisé*). *Ulysses*, a cardinal text of interwar literary modernism, was a significant work of classical reception in its own right, not least for its creative substructure of Homeric correspondences famously elaborated by Stuart Gilbert (1930), but also because of its parodic riffs on and recoding of a slew of popular and scholarly adaptations, translations and remediations of the antique. The geography of the novel's first subscribership or buyership literalizes Erll's metaphor of travel, reminding us that transmission refers to both an act or the action of reception as well as the everyday reality of supply chain, carriage and conveyance and the transport infrastructure of the postwar world.

The expected model or map of *Ulysses*' geographic dispersal would centre on Paris – the 'literary Greenwich meridian' in Pascale Casanova's phrase – with lines of dissemination radiating out from this central hub as the first printing of the novel, 'consecrated at the centre' by cultural intermediaries like Larbaud (Casanova 2004: 4, 115), spread across the globe. In actuality, selling *Ulysses* was a multilocal enterprise with the cities of Windsor, Ontario and Highland Park, Illinois both critical for the distribution of copies to US-based subscribers. Harriet Shaw Weaver, Joyce's principal financial backer, even ran something of a pop-up shop in London, taking and filling orders from British booksellers. And Paris itself was just one more waystation in the transnational itineraries of elite migrants who, stopping off in the French capital or passing through, might acquire a copy of *Ulysses*. A demobbed Europe was still a mobile Europe and, in the early 1920s, Joyce's novel was bought by an influx of Prohibition-fleeing Americans drawn to Paris by the weak franc, even as copies departed for the east in the trunks and diplomatic bags of colonial administrators, servicemen and British Legation staff.

How, then, did the cultural or ideological liberties migrants looked for or found in host countries (typically France) align with the artistic or creative freedoms claimed for *Ulysses*? What was at stake in smuggling a copy across a national border? What part did migrant networks, whether in host countries or countries of origin, play in the dissemination of the novel? How did *Ulysses* reorient or extend these networks? And how did the early reception of the novel differ from transnational migrant community to community? The experiences of Irish and Irish-descent migrants are of particular relevance to these questions. To be sure, subscription was not limited to those suffering from some form of modernist *Fernweh* or wanderlust. Individual subscribers' motivations were as multiform as the migration trajectories they undertook but are irreducible, I want to suggest, to literary appreciation or speculative investment. The story of *Ulysses*' rapid spread across parts of the world offers an especially rich case study in 'bibliomigrancy': B. Venkat Mani's term for the movement or migration of printed material both physically and virtually, which encompasses everything from book production, trade and circulation to translation, adaptation and cultural consecration. In the case of *Ulysses*, at every stage in this '"worlding" of literature' (Mani 2011: 289) highly

mobile migrants played a crucial role, beginning with the novel's very author and publisher.

Joyce and Beach in Paris: the subscription edition of *Ulysses*

Joyce and Beach had overlapped in Paris in the winter of 1902–3 during each's first stay in the city, but they formally met in July 1920 at a mixer organized to launch the author of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* on literary Paris. Beach, the daughter of a Baltimore Presbyterian minister, was a frequent visitor to Continental Europe and, by 1919, had settled permanently in France after a stint in Yugoslav Serbia working for the Balkan Commission of the American Red Cross (Beach 2010: xxx). She opened her English-language bookshop and lending library, the famous Shakespeare and Company, at 8 rue Dupuytren in November 1919. Eight months later, she met Joyce, newly rearrived in the French capital from post-Austro-Hungarian Trieste; nine months later again, she branched out into publishing and committed to bringing out the first edition of *Ulysses*. That decision is much mythologized in popular and scholarly accounts of literary modernism alike, perhaps most famously by Beach herself in her midcentury life-writing (1950: 20; 1959: 47), but also prominent in the mythmaking that surrounds *Ulysses* are the names of those who subscribed to the Shakespeare and Company edition.

But, first, why subscribers? *Ulysses* was issued as a subscription edition in 1,000 copies (officially, at least) between February and March 1922. Subscription publishing meant Beach could bypass much of the machinery of the early twentieth-century book trade and, as such, promised higher profits. Of these, Joyce's share was to be a generous two-thirds. More immediately, however, subscription answered the legal challenge brought against the serial *Ulysses* in 1920–1, when Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, the editors of the New York *Little Review*, were convicted of publishing obscenity. The *Little Review* had been serializing *Ulysses* in infrequent instalments since 1918 until an unsolicited recipient objected to its excerpt from the 'Nausicaa' episode. A court case ensued and, in February 1921, Anderson and Heap were found guilty, fined and enjoined against publishing further extracts (see Gillers 2007: 250–63). As news of the successful prosecution trickled in to Paris and with B. W. Huebsch, the New York publisher of *A Portrait*, crying off from his agreement to publish *Ulysses*, Joyce began scouting around for alternatives. Subscription on the Continent would mean the book was not openly available on newsstands or in bookshops and so militate against further prosecution. At the same time, there was subscription's 'strange combination', in Michael Gamer's phrase, of 'heightened publicity and economic openness' to contend with (2017: 57), which required an intermediary who could handle cash flow and be the visible face of the entire enterprise, thereby maintaining a degree of social distance between author and prospective readership. Joyce lit on Beach as his go-to. The bookshop owner had already distinguished herself as a casher of his cheques and was the latest all-purpose factotum secretary to enter his social orbit. In April 1921, she volunteered – or was pressurized

(see Bishop 1998: 7–10) – to turn publisher. The rest is, if not quite history, then nearing mythology.

Beach and Joyce arranged with the printer, Maurice Darantiere of Dijon, to issue *Ulysses* in three formats or series. One hundred copies in *édition de luxe* were printed on Dutch handmade paper from the Van Gelder Zonen paper mill; these copies were numbered 1 to 100 and signed by Joyce on the limitation page and made available to subscribers at 350 francs. The next 150 copies were printed on slightly larger vergé d'Arches paper, numbered 101 to 250 and, though unsigned, went for 250 francs. The final series, 750 unsigned copies numbered 251 to 1,000, were printed on less expensive vergé à barbes stock and priced at 150 francs (Slocum and Cahoon 1953: 24–5). Would-be subscribers made their choice from a four-page prospectus or mailer that Beach began circulating in the summer and autumn of 1921. Darantiere was already odd-jobbing for Beach when she founded the Shakespeare and Company publishing house. Although he had produced little more than a consignment of ex-libris slips for her lending library at that point, he was also the printer of the Cahiers des Amis des Livres series overseen by Adrienne Monnier, Beach's lover. A natural choice in terms of social networks, then, his Imprimerie Darantiere was less of a fit for an English-language text the length and complexity of *Ulysses*. And, yet, the great advantage of this ad hoc arrangement, which no one except perhaps Joyce foresaw in 1921, was the opportunity it presented the author to continue writing the novel on proof. Beach, with a novice publisher's enthusiasm bordering on cluelessness, granted Joyce extraordinary latitude to 'revise and improve and connect and continue and create all at the one time' (Joyce 1957: 173). That story of multiple rounds of proofs covered with spidery handwritten additions has been told many times before (see, for example, Prescott 1959) and, indeed, was already in circulation in 1922 as part of the early promotional effort to push the novel (see Moss 1922: 14; Reid 1922a: 5; Reid 1922b: 69).

With Beach ever of slender means and much of her capital sunk in the bookshop, subscription had to cover the cost of printing *Ulysses*. Here the author's and publisher's social networks and the postwar status of Paris as a mecca for internationally mobile elites were key elements in tapping prospective subscribers. Within days of throwing his publicatory lot in with Beach, for example, Joyce flagged Paris as a crossroads for transatlantic travellers. Writing to Weaver to inform her of the new plan for the novel, he anticipated a flurry of orders from the city's expat community as 'a great number of Americans are in passing and they are likely to become a fixed colony here' (Joyce 1957: 162). Two weeks later, he was foregrounding social networks. Optimistic about the volume of pre-orders, he was confident he could supply names for a hundred subscriptions (Joyce 1966b: 41). On the same day that Joyce offered this bullish assessment, Beach wrote to her sister Holly, framing the publishing and publicizing of *Ulysses* as a group effort: 'Adrienne helps with publishing details in which I am perfectly inexperienced, and everyone is interested in subscribing to *Ulysses* and in bringing me names of likely subscribers. Marjorie Reid is going to give me a write-up in the *New York Sunday Herald* with a sketch of Joyce and me in the shop and other publicity is promised' (Beach 2010: 85–6). Much of this early promo work survives in the form of puff pieces for the

transatlantic and Continental press that congratulate Beach on her pluck and hype up the forthcoming publication. The obliging journalists tended to be American expat acquaintances of Beach and/or members of her lending library – people like Reid and Rosemary Carr, who wrote for the Paris editions of the *New York Herald* and *Chicago Tribune* and who could be relied on to maintain a steady drip-feed of chatty, newsy updates on the book's progress. Sisley Huddleston, another of Beach's Shakespeare and Company 'bunnies' – that is, *abonnés* or subscribers to her lending library (Beach 1959: 22) – was the Paris correspondent for the London *Observer* in the early 1920s, and his coverage of *Ulysses* for the newspaper in 1921–2 did much to boost stagnating orders (see Rainey 1998: 58).

From A-listers to the little-known: subscribers to *Ulysses*

Behind the scenes, Joyce was also looking to transnational migrants. He ransacked his address book to compile wish lists of prospective subscribers whom Beach could target in her leaflet campaign. Tracking his own migration trajectory in loose chronological order from Trieste to Zurich to Paris, these lists provide a freeze-frame of his transatlantic social networks, both professional and personal, in the spring of 1921. Prospects include holdovers from his Dublin days (Oliver St John Gogarty, Lady Gregory); pupils and students he had taught in Trieste (the Bliznakoff sisters, Marcello Rogers); financial backers and other stalwarts (John Quinn, Weaver); and assorted cultural intermediaries and 'general influencers' in Eric Bulson's phrase (2020: 139), whom Joyce had first encountered on the European mainland, whether in person or on the page: from translators, editors and anthologists to literary critics and fellow creatives. The make-up of Joyce's network, dispersed across two continents, contributed to the novel's wide dispersal and protected sales from the worst effects of the economic depression of 1920–1. Out of seventy-two people named on one such list, for example, thirty-five subscribed for or received copies of *Ulysses* (almost a 50 per cent success rate). And, between them, these recipients account for perhaps as many as ninety copies of the first printing. Not only highly mobile himself, Joyce's Continental relocations brought him into contact with contemporaries who were themselves on the move. His wish lists include Irish reacquaintances such as John McCormack, who caught up with Joyce while performing in Paris in December 1920 and who would go on to subscribe for a copy of the 750 series, and new Dublin contacts made in the French capital like A. J. Leventhal (who also subscribed) and Austin Clarke (who did not). Further afield, migratory associates, friends and family members took on the work of promoting the edition in their host locales. T. S. Eliot, then based in London, offered to supply names of likely subscribers so that Beach's prospectus would be 'properly circularised' in England (Eliot 2011: 562). Others had cooperation thrust upon them: Joyce put his brother Stanislaus down for ten copies of *Ulysses*, which he was to sell on to fellow residents of Italian Trieste.

Even as Beach and Joyce were still formulating their scheme to publish *Ulysses*, orders began rolling in. 'Two more subscriptions today', Beach announced on 7 April 1921

(Beach 2021: 20). She left out the names on this occasion, but among the earliest subscribers who ordered and paid for *Ulysses* were: Ruby Baxter, an actor from Melbourne who had toured Ireland in the early 1900s and was, in 1921, based in Paris; Beach's sister Holly, a fellow veteran of the American Red Cross who was then living in Florence; Charles Rosenbury Erdman, a postgraduate researcher in political science at Princeton; Paul Rosenfeld, scion of a well-to-do, Upper West Side Jewish family and a confirmed Europeanist, who had spent the summer in Paris and was already distinguishing himself as a music critic for the *Dial*; Percy Beaumont Wadsworth, an English journalist who, while living in Belfast in 1918–19, had briefly corresponded with Joyce using the cod-Irish pseudonym 'Owen Nugent' and who had relocated to the newly formed Czechoslovakia by the time *Ulysses* appeared; and Alec Waugh, the British novelist and elder brother to Evelyn. Even within this small sample size, early adopters tended to skew young (their average age was just under thirty) and to be highly educated. Most of them worked in the 1920s creative economy and would experience multistage migration trajectories over the course of their lives. All had the means, not insubstantial, to subscribe to the 750 series but may have been unable to afford either of the two more expensive series. And three of the six were known personally to Beach – indeed, one was her sister – which underscores, again, the importance of transnational social networks to early orders for *Ulysses*.

Typically, however, such people never bulk large in accounts of the first-printing subscribers. Rather, it is the A-listers of yesteryear who populate records of *Ulysses* buyers. Noël Riley Fitch, for example, singles out 'Bennett, two Huxleys, three Sitwells, Woolf, Churchill, Wells, Walpole and Yeats' in her version of events (1983: 105), where mononymy is an index of enduring celebrity status; for Kevin Birmingham, writing thirty years later, the big hitters are 'Hart Crane. W. B. Yeats. Ivor Winters. William Carlos Williams. Wallace Stevens. Winston Churchill' (2014: 204). While many of these famous people also experienced migration, that is not the reason for their inclusion. Rather, the cumulative effect of such celebrity groupings is to lend subscribers' prestige to a work that is itself already a major conferrer of cultural capital – as though in some cosy act of mutually beneficial namecheck. Who's in and who's out of these postmortem celebrity endorsements shifts over time in line with changing canons of taste and the ebbs and flows of name recognition but, until about the turn of the millennium, such rollcalls served the additional function of field formation. Who's Whos of noteworthy subscribers could be drafted into a periodizing narrative of high modernism's *annus mirabilis*, 1922, in which the very *un*representativeness of such lists acted as shorthand for a modernist studies that was then focused on a tiny cohort of canonical works by prominent figures, usually white and male. Cracks began to show in this account in the mid-1990s through the work of Lawrence Rainey, for whom the breathless name-dropping of *Ulysses* subscribers amounted to 'little more than lists of memorable and semimemorable literati' (1996: 531). Rainey's course correction checks the circular flow of legitimacy between canonical text and high-profile subscriber by shifting critical attention to the material aspects of literary production. In his seminal *Institutions of Modernism* (1998), he rejects the self-congratulatory narrative of instant acclaim for *Ulysses* from the era's movers and

shakers to argue instead that Beach and Joyce marketed the first printing to an emerging 'corps of patron-collectors or patron-investors' (76) made up of savvy bookdealers and middlemanning speculators. In this influential reading, the big names are so much showy tinsel; the real story concerns the marketeers and dealers who snapped up the bulk of the print run, whether as a long or short investment opportunity.

In support of Rainey's thesis, one might add that the process of namechecking or alluding to prominent subscribers had its start in the Joyce–Beach promotional campaign. Writing to Alessandro Francini Bruni, a Trieste journalist, a few weeks after the prospectuses went out, Joyce hinted that '[s]omething really comic' might be written about the early subscribers, and he showcased their mirth-making variety: 'a son or nephew of Bela Kun, the British Minister of War Winston Churchill, an Anglican bishop and a leader of the Irish revolutionary movement' (Joyce 1966b: 46). Bruni did not take the bait of ready copy, but the Paris *New York Tribune* was happy to. An unsigned paragraph in the newspaper for 22 June 1921, probably the work of Reid, noted that '[t]he interest taken in this suppressed novel is attested to by the prominence of subscribers already on the lists' (Anon. 1921a: 3). Noninterest could also play into the early marketing. The story of George Bernard Shaw's refusal to subscribe to the first edition, well known in Joyce studies from its appearance in Beach's life-writing (1950: 22–3; 1959: 51–3) and Richard Ellmann's biography of Joyce (1959/1982: 506–7), saw print as early as an October 1922 newspaper review of *Ulysses* (Buss 1922: 9). But whereas, for author and publisher, Who's Whos of subscribers and the occasional noteworthy nonsubscriber were one more piece in the logistical puzzle of selling *Ulysses*, the present-day 'ritual of naming', in Rainey's phrase, strips this marketing gimmick of its historical specificity and rationale, transforming it instead into some glitzy 'timeless pageant, a static sequence of grand figures' (1998: 43). All that is puff melts into air.

Yet Rainey's all-in on patron-investors is something of an overcorrection, as Ted Bishop (1998) and Bulson (2020: 154) have argued. In recuperating the part played by the bookshop manager in making the first printing such a success – 'he may have been the most significant protagonist of them all' (1998: 59) – Rainey places excessive emphasis on this intermediary figure as an end in himself and, also, at the expense of *Ulysses*' actual owner-readers. 'Beach's edition,' he contends, 'was directed primarily towards dealers, towards speculators. . . . [T]he reason to buy the edition [was] to be able to sell it again, perhaps at a significant profit if all went well' (1998: 55–6). This is an original and provocative argument, but the data do not really support or are missing for Rainey's speculation thesis. Far from sitting on copies, the evidence suggests dealers quickly sold on stock to bookshops at discount. One such shop was the New York branch of Edmond Byrne Hackett's Brick Row Book Shop, where readers as prominent as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Edmund Wilson acquired their copies of *Ulysses* by the early summer of 1922. Among the dealers, John Clark makes for an illustrative example. Based in London, he was an export agent for booksellers in British India and the imperial dominions of Australia and South Africa. Clark ordered a dozen copies of *Ulysses*, among them a single copy of the most expensive 100 series, which Beach dispatched to England at the end of May. Within two months, one of Clark's customers, the Melbourne bookshop

Robertson and Mullens, was offering *Ulysses* for sale under the tagline 'the only copies in Australia' (Anon. 1922: 6). The signed copy was bought by a local businessman, F. J. Brient, in a spirit of civic-mindedness as, in late August that same year, he donated it to the Public Library of Victoria (now State Library Victoria). This single copy of *Ulysses*, no. 25, was on the open market for less than six months before its institutional accession, changing hands several times during that period but, ultimately, exiting the speculation market for the altogether longer-term investment of public ownership.

Far from open-ended appreciation, then, export agents anticipated thin profit margins on copies of the first printing – to the extent that most contacted Beach on the strength of pre-orders from their own customers in the trade. Moreover, while it is one thing to sniff at lists of subscribers never exceeding 'fifteen names' (1998: 43), as Rainey does when he cherry-picks examples from the work of Fitch or Melissa Banta (see Joyce 1987: 221), it's quite another to do so when he had to hand the recently published edition of Beach's little black book. Alongside listings for bookshops and export agents, this *calepin de vente* or sales notebook for *Ulysses* catalogues almost 290 unique, named recipients of the first printing (Barnes 1996: 111–34). In the years since Laura Barnes' edition was published, the names of over 150 additional early owners and subscribers have come to light. To mention only a single constituency relevant to this volume, we can now identify a number of the classicists who bought *Ulysses*, among them Aubrey Leonard Attwater, army chum of Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon who had read Classics at Pembroke College, Cambridge; Mitchell Starrett Buck, American translator of classical erotica; Herbert J. M. Milne, assistant keeper at the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum; the teenage Basil Andrew Murray, who was reading Greats at New College, Oxford and won the Charles Oldham Prize for an essay on a classical theme in 1923 (his father was the celebrated Gilbert Murray, whose *Euripides and His Age* was in Joyce's Trieste library); and Edward Perry Warren, millionaire collector of antiquities.

Unknown unknowns: reconstructing biographies of migrant subscribers

For all the misgivings outlined above, what Rainey identifies as 'something unsatisfying' in the hyperselectivity behind lists of notable subscribers captures the wider disciplinary unease that, in the late 1990s, was ushering in the new modernist studies. The watchword of this critical refiguration was 'expansion', whether in terms of modernism's periodicity or geography or the range and character of works studied, as Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz argue in their oft-cited frontline report (2008: 737), or else along methodological lines through the application of approaches and insights from neighbouring fields, as Mao acknowledges in a more recent return to this moment of critical emergence (2021: 3). What this means for the *Ulysses* first printing is a greater awareness of and interest in subscribers and early owners outside the nimbus of big names. (The prior focus on A-listers, I suggest, is concomitant with the one-time near impossibility of tracking down information on people beyond this circle.) A quarter of a

century on from *Institutions of Modernism* and the inauguration of the new modernist studies, the big difference for identifying subscribers is the availability of digitized historical records. Not only are significant holdings from the Sylvia Beach Papers at Princeton University Library now accessible online as digital facsimiles but also the explosion in resources for genealogical and family history research means new life can be breathed into the bare names found in Beach's order books. Thumbnail biographies can be reconstructed from digitized census returns, passport applications, passenger manifests and vital records from across the world. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a number of the Shakespeare and Company 'bunnies' also subscribed to *Ulysses*. The Shakespeare and Company Project (Kotin and Sutton Koeser 2021) is a web application and database of information gleaned from borrowers' cards and Beach's yearly logbooks, and it details the comings and goings of this overlap group in the weeks and months surrounding publication. Another helpful resource is the digital libraries like Google Books, HathiTrust and Internet Archive that provide access to text-searchable versions of memoirs and life-writing from subscribers and early owners; many of these accounts describe first encounters with *Ulysses*. Whereas before, researchers were, at best, at the mercy of Beach's uncertain penmanship, at worst, indifferent to subscribers' identities, now many of these people's stories are legible for the first time.

Take, for example, the subscribers Hellé Flecker (1882–1961), Marjorie Meeker (1897–1970) and Nancy Shostac (1895–1939). All three were members of Beach's lending library and received copies of the *Ulysses* 750 series in the month of publication. All, moreover, were serial migrants. Of the three, Flecker is best known today – or perhaps least unknown – as she was the widow of James Elroy Flecker, the English tubercular poet-playwright. As Hellé Skiadaressi, a Greek national, she met her future husband on board ship for Ottoman Constantinople, where he was serving in the British consular service. They married in 1911 and Flecker was posted to Beirut, but he died in a Davos sanatorium only four years later, aged thirty. His widow lived in Neuilly-sur-Seine on the outskirts of Paris, from where she acted as something of an official keeper of the flame. She contributed to a string of publications of her husband's work, including posthumous editions of his play *Don Juan* and selected correspondence (Flecker 1925, 1926, 1930), and she involved herself in the first production of his Orientalist fantasy *Hassan*. A member of Beach's lending library for many years, Hellé Flecker acquired copy no. 344 of the first printing.

Listed as 'Mrs Wing' in Beach's sales notebook (Barnes 1996: 123), Marjorie Meeker was an American poet who published in such magazines as *Poetry*, *New Republic* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Born in England where her father was US Consul at Bradford, Meeker attended Bryn Mawr in the 1910s. In 1921 she married Shirley Townsend Wing, former Rhodes scholar and a confirmed Francophile, and the newly-weds relocated to Paris. When she returned to the United States the following March, copy no. 298 of *Ulysses* accompanied her in her travelling trunk. A snapshot description survives of the twenty-four-year-old returnee. Charles J. Finger, a fellow Anglo-American writer, visited Meeker in Columbus, Ohio that spring and the pair 'talked of James Joyce' (1922a: 85). Given the limited US-availability of *Ulysses* in the year of publication, it is

likely, too, that it was Meeker who lent Finger the copy he consulted for his grudgingly admiring review that September (1922b: 131).

Nancy Shostac, another elusive figure, was a second-generation Kyivan Jew, born in Manhattan in 1895. By 1914, she was working as a photographer and running a studio and gallery in the city, where she specialized in portraits of 'women who do things', as a contemporary newspaper profile reported (quoted in Fahs 2011: 88). Shostac relocated to mainland Europe in the spring of 1921 for a year of study and travel, during which time she joined Shakespeare and Company and met Joyce on at least one occasion. Back in New York, she worked as a dressmaker and ran a home interiors shop on Lexington Avenue for many years, making periodic return trips to France and Germany for stock. A painter her entire adult life, she studied at the Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst in Munich in the mid-1920s (Dickey 2011: n.p.). Like Flecker, she lived in the shadow of a better-known male family member, in Shostac's case her brother Percy, the author of *14th Street: A Novel in Verse* (1930) and a Broadway stage manager. Nancy was a sometime member of Beach's lending library in the early 1920s and acquired copy no. 353 of *Ulysses*.

We are beyond 'semimemorable' with such subscribers. Indeed, these three women are little known today even to scholars of the period. Meeker is survived by a single slim volume of verse and, for all Shostac's creative energy, the only reference to her work I have come across concerns a studio photograph she took of Grace Edna Hart, mother of Hart Crane (see Crane 1974: 104 n.). These subscribers are not people whose names scholars associate with Joyce, yet Shostac's is an inscribed copy – one of only about forty that Joyce inscribed to a named recipient in 1922. With information about her so scanty, we simply do not know why he chose to sign this copy of *Ulysses* for a twenty-seven-year-old art student heading home to New York.

It is tempting to extrapolate from such pocket biographies and to identify membership of the subscriber cohort with the so-called 'Lost Generation': those born between 1883 and 1900 and, in particular, the loose grouping of American expatriate writers who had served in the war and spent time in Paris during the 1920s. And, to be sure, among the subscribers, buyers and recipients of first-printing copies of *Ulysses* are such *echt* lost generationers as Djuna Barnes, Crane, E. E. Cummings, Eliot, Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Robert McAlmon, John Dos Passos and Ezra Pound. But, again, as with the Who's Whos of noteworthy subscribers, the numbers do not add up: for all the glamour of their names, these people make up a tiny, unrepresentative fraction of *Ulysses* buyers and readers. The label 'Lost Generation' is largely one of convenience – Philip Young, for example, is acidly witty on its shortcomings (1975: 130) – and its currency today speaks more to an ongoing cultural love affair with expatriate interwar Paris than any descriptive or denotive value it might possess. And outside the Lost Generation's semi-strict birth range, American expatriate subscribers to *Ulysses* include such people as Natalie Clifford Barney, the wealthy, feminist salonnière and writer, and up-and-comers like the Shakespeare and Company 'bunnies' Eugene Berton and Aaron Copland, who arrived in Paris in early 1921, aged nineteen and twenty, respectively. Berton, né Cohn, is unknown today but achieved modest success as a classical pianist and singer before drifting into

show music and writing for Hollywood. (His older brother Vic is still recognized for a contribution to jazz drumming.) A native Chicagoan, Eugene came from a musically accomplished family of Eastern European Jews who had fled the Russian pogroms of the 1880s. He got his start on the vaudeville circuit as a child and, by 1918, was getting noticed in the *Little Review* (Anderson 1918: 31). From 1921 to 1923, he roved between London, Paris and Berlin for voice training, along the way meeting Joyce – to whom he introduced a preteen brother as Joyce's 'youngest reader' (Berton 1974: 230) – and subscribing for a copy of the *Ulysses* 750 series. Copland, the American composer, was also the son of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, and his stay in Paris coincided with a pivotal moment in his early career. He wrote to his parents in October 1921 with the 'wonderful news' that he had sold his first composition (Copland 2006: 21) and, a few weeks later, joined Beach's lending library. He was present for the reading from *Ulysses* at La Maison des Amis des Livres in December where Larbaud tipped Ireland for its 'rentrée sensationnelle' and took possession of copy no. 322 the following spring.

Non-American expats who lived in Paris and subscribed to *Ulysses* include, for example, Arthur Lett-Haines, the English painter and sculptor, and Mary Butts, the English writer and diarist. Butts was married to fellow writer and *Ulysses* subscriber John Rodker, whom she styled in classical terms a Cupid to her Psyche (Butts 2002: 48). In July 1920, the couple 'dash[ed] off to Paris' (Butts 2002: 163), where they met Joyce and hatched a short-lived plan to publish *Ulysses* under Rodker's Ovid Press, an imprint largely underwritten by Mary's money. The Rodkers were among a group of people whom Joyce described in migratory terms as continually 'moving between London, Paris and the country' (1966b: 17). Butts left her husband for her lover Cecil Maitland and spent the months on either side of the publication of *Ulysses* between Aleister Crowley's Abbey of Thelema in Cefalù, Sicily; Hampstead in London; her native Dorset; Left Bank Paris; a spa resort in the Schwarzwald; and the Austrian ski town of St Anton in the Tyrolean Alps. Whether *Ulysses* joined her on this odyssey is not known. Douglas Goldring (himself a subscriber) drew a vivid word picture of Butts' Paris sitting room during the middle twenties with its 'enormous divan, piled with purple cushions, three or four rickety chairs, a bright green piece of sculpture by Ossip Zadkine, two flower-pieces by Cedric Morris, a water-colour by Kit Wood and a clever portrait-drawing of Mary by Jean Cocteau. . . . On the divan, on top of the purple cushions, lay the sky-blue bulk of *Ulysses*' (1943: 153). This is the last sighting we have of copy no. 455, at rest and cushioned, regalia-like, as though for an award ceremony or religious service and in the company of other modernist artefacts with a direct link to the room's occupant. But beyond the creative industries are migrant subscribers like Arthur Schoenbrun (1889–1967), a New York fur buyer, who was the son of immigrant Hungarian Jews (his material grandmother was a 'Blum', no less) and who criss-crossed the Atlantic in the 1920s acquiring stock. Schoenbrun received two of the earliest copies of *Ulysses* to be published, nos. 252 and 253, which accompanied him aboard the White Star Line's RMS *Olympic* reaching New York on 15 February. These were the first copies of the novel to arrive in the United States.

Butts and Lett-Haines, Copland, Berton and Barney, as well as Barnes, Crane, Cummings and McAlmon, all entered into same-sex relationships or described themselves in language

we would now map onto LGBTQ+ identities. Modernists whom present-day readers identify as queer were drawn, undoubtedly, to *Ulysses* (the list above is far from exhaustive). One thinks of Paul Cadmus' 1931 painting *Jerry*, an intimate portrait of Jared French, the artist's lover, reclining amid crumpled sheets, in his hand a late printing of the *Ulysses* second edition. The status of this audience as a coherent counterpublic has been overplayed, however, and implicit in the presentist foregrounding of queer modernists as the primary readership for *Ulysses* is an oddly whiggish triumphalism around progressive sexual politics. This impulse reaches its gushy apogee in Birmingham's claim that reading Joyce's novel was a mark of 'aesthetic, philosophical and sexual audacity. It initiated you into modernism's new era, and if it was a Bible of the outcasts, reading it made you part of an outcast community spanning the globe' (2014: 261). This does not sound very much like Winston Churchill. Nor, for that matter, does it sound like the subscriber Bryher, lover of H.D. but the daughter of Sir John Ellerman, the shipping magnate and reputedly the richest man in England. And Sassoon, for his part, skimming through Ottoline Morrell's copy of *Ulysses* in March 1922, found the work 'repellent' (1981: 113). Around the same time, Katherine Mansfield wrote of having to 'wade through' the book and declared herself 'on the whole … dead *against* it' (2008: 180). For every Anderson or Heap who acquired a copy of *Ulysses*, there was a John Quinn, misogynistic homophobe who subscribed for a dozen copies (see Baggett 1995). Claiming a monolithic subscribership for *Ulysses* or singling out one of the novel's multifaceted constituencies as though it were representative of the whole blurs the social identities and cultural backgrounds of the first subscribers in the service of self-congratulatory narratives about a progressive, boho-adjacent worldview.

Irish migrant subscribers

A similar sample-selection bias obtains in accounts of the early Irish reception of *Ulysses*. Much has been written about the Irish Republican response to the novel (see Gibbons 2023; McCourt 2022: 26–7), but Irishmen and women of many different political persuasions and social identities also acquired the volume. Prominent among these were the Irish abroad and the Irish of the diaspora. Indeed, while Beach took orders for about forty copies of *Ulysses* from subscribers on the island of Ireland, three-quarters of these were from bookshops north and south. (Instructed by Joyce, she also gifted four copies to friends and family in Ireland, and she presented legal deposit copies to the National Library of Ireland and Trinity College Library.) Her records indicate only about nine copies being sent to private individuals in Ireland – a tally bested by Quinn alone, who as the son of Munster migrants to the United States was a second-generation Irish American. Another dozen or so copies went to Irish-born subscribers living overseas, whether in London (St John Ervine, Frank Harris, Norah Hoult and Aeneas O'Neill); New York (Ernest A. Boyd and Padraic Colum); Oxford (W. B. Yeats); or Paris (A. M. Killen, Roderic O'Conor and Arthur Power). Another Irish-born migrant subscriber was Joseph Maunsell Hone, the 'Oxford insipid' with whom Joyce had sparred over the

publication of *Dubliners* (Joyce 1966a: 230), and who ordered his copy of *Ulysses* from Lake Garda, while stopping off en route between Milan and Venice.

A subscriber identified only as 'Colonel Preston' in Beach's sales notebook turns out to be one Jenico Edward Preston (1855–1940), scion of an old Anglo-Irish family, the Prestons of Gormanston, County Meath. Born at the family home in Saint-Servan, Brittany, two years before the Indian Rebellion of 1857, Preston was a career soldier in the British Indian Army. He fought in the Jowaki Expedition, the Second Anglo–Afghan War and the Third Anglo–Burmese War, eventually rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and being created a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1909 (Lundy 2019). A Catholic Unionist, he was a first cousin once removed of his near namesake Jenico Edward Joseph Preston, 15th Viscount Gormanston. Similarly, the subscription form for one 'Martin Hemphill' of Oxford turns out to be from Martyn Charles Andrews Hemphill (1901–57), son of Fitzroy Hemphill, 3rd Baron Hemphill of Rathkenny and Cashel, County Tipperary, and the future fourth baron himself. Born in London, he was studying at New College, Oxford in 1921; he spent some time in Rome in the mid-1920s as a special correspondent for the *Irish Independent* and was called to the bar shortly before succeeding his father to the title. Hemphill was a first cousin once removed on his mother's side of Edward Martyn, the playwright and first president of Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin. Another copy of the first printing was acquired by Geoffrey Rothe Clarke (1871–1950) who, in 1922, was Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs for British India. Born in Medinipur, Bengal, to Church of Ireland parents making a life for themselves in the British Raj, Clarke studied French and Classics at Trinity College Dublin before taking the Indian Civil Service exams. In 1925, he was granted a knighthood. Coming so soon after the close of Hobsbawm's age of empire, it should hardly surprise us that the geographic dispersal of *Ulysses* took place, in part, along colonial lines, mirroring the regimes of mobility and immobility that had emerged in the postwar period. With some notable exceptions (such as copy no. 47 acquired by Ricardo Güiraldes, the Argentine novelist and poet), copies of *Ulysses* that reached the Global South tended to do so in the hands of colonial administrators like J. E. B. Hotson, ex-British Indian Army man and a career civil servant based in present-day Sukkur, Pakistan, or enlisted men like T. E. Lawrence, Arab Bureau intelligence officer turned Royal Air Force aircraftman who, in the late 1920s, was stationed at the Drigh Road RAF airbase in Karachi. With *Ulysses* in their kit-bag, such individuals became inadvertent conduits for the dissemination of Irish modernist literature across regions where its reception remains largely uncharted (but see Ward, Chapter 16, this volume), setting the stage for a cultural exchange that reinforced and reinscribed colonial boundaries.

Subscribers like Hone, Preston, Clarke and, arguably, Lawrence place us in the ranks of the Anglo-Irish: those who, as the Irish Free State came into being, found themselves 'spiritually hyphenated' in Stephen Gwynn's famous formulation (1926: 11). Other such Irish migrant in-betweens include Alice Mary Killen, the Belfast Presbyterian intellectual and Shakespeare and Company 'bunny' who completed a doctorate at the Sorbonne in 1920 and wrote an appreciative review of the French translation of *Ulysses* (Killen 1930); and Abraham Jacob Leventhal, the son of Latvian Jews from Russian Courland, who

spent time in Palestine after the First World War as part of the Zionist Commission, and shuttled back and forth between Paris and Dublin for much of his adult life. One of the more well-travelled copies of *Ulysses* in the spring of 1922 was that bought by the New Zealander Alfred Hall Skelton. An Auckland barrister and second-generation Irish immigrant, Hall Skelton (1878–1955) was 'an Anglican scion of an Ulster family', in the words of the *New Zealand Times* (Anon. 1921b: 3). He arrived in Paris in January 1922 after several weeks' travel to participate in the Irish Race Convention as a Dominion delegate of the New Zealand Self-Determination for Ireland League. He was an energetic pro-Treatyite, and the Kiwi newspapers reported his clashes with Éamon de Valera on the question of a republic and his rubbishing of the proposed Irish boycott of British goods. After the Convention, Hall Skelton stuck around Paris for long enough to buy two copies of the *Ulysses* 750 series: one for a Mrs Cadell of the Hotel Jacob where he was staying and a second for himself. By mid-February, Hall Skelton was in London; he sailed for New York on the 23rd in order to study the administration of Prohibition at first hand; and, in late March, took ship for New Zealand aboard the RMS *Niagara* out of Vancouver. Travel-weary and wayworn having crossed two oceans, Hall Skelton and his copy of *Ulysses* arrived in Auckland in early April 1922.

Transnational migration and classical reception: conclusions

Writing in the months following Yeats' receipt of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Ezra Pound nominated Joyce for the 1924 award, arguing that should the two Irishmen's shared nationality present a problem, Joyce could be honoured as a 'representative of the republic of letters or of the Heimatlos' (1924: 43). In context, Pound's meaning is clear – he has in mind expatriate literary modernism – but his reference to statelessness is apposite. In the aftermath of the First World War, with unprecedented millions uprooted and displaced, the first printing of *Ulysses* emerged not only as a monumental literary work but also as a nexus of transnational migration and classical reception. Migrants represented a key demographic in the geographic dispersal of the novel to distant corners of the English-speaking world and beyond, with *Ulysses*' early reach and reception reliant on the transnational networks and mobility of its first reader-subscribers.

PART VI
IRISH CLASSICISM AND THE WORLD STAGE

CHAPTER 16
THE GLOBAL AFTERLIVES OF JOYCEAN CLASSICISM: CASE STUDIES FROM ARGENTINA AND INDIA

Kiron Ward

James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which is famously structured in line with episodes from Homer's *Odyssey*, stands as one of the most globally influential manifestations of Irish classicism to date. The central proposal of this chapter will be that by studying the migration, reception and influence of Joyce's work (especially *Ulysses*) across the globe, we find a range of case studies that demonstrate the impact that Joyce's classicism has had on 'post-colonial' literatures. This chapter will begin by defining the terms 'global afterlife' and 'Joycean classicism', and will then consider two different 'sites' of their interaction. Firstly, I will consider the reception of *Ulysses* in 1920s Argentina, which demonstrates the ways that Joycean classicism was co-opted into the complex culture war that underwrote the literary networks of modernist Buenos Aires, as typified by the rivalry between Jorge Luis Borges and Leopoldo Marechal. Secondly, I will look to the tradition of the Anglophone Indian novel, with Salman Rushdie as one of its major theorists and proponents, looking at how Rushdie values G. V. Desani's *All About H. Hatterr* (1948) in his literary criticism and in *The Satanic Verses* (1988).

While James Joyce's example of modernist classical reception is extraordinary and worthy of study of its own terms, the reception of *Ulysses* itself makes for a truly compelling study on the impact of Irish classicism. As Declan Kiberd notes, in his classic account of the significance of Joyce's oeuvre in modern Irish literary history, Joyce's achievement must also be measured in his reception and influence among mid- to late century postcolonial writers, for 'The modernism of Joyce was not only that of Mann, Proust or Eliot: even more it anticipated that of Rushdie, Marquez and the postcolonial artists' (Kiberd 1996: 339). After all, if Joyce's 'mythic realism' is a milestone in the variable and contested invention of Ireland, as Kiberd contends it is, then Ireland's variable and contested invention also takes place in the way that Joyce's 'mythic realism' has been received – and it is certainly the case that Joyce's reception and influence beyond Western Europe has been extensive.[1] The contention of this chapter is that the reception and influence of Joyce's specific form of classicism among non-European artists is a particularly suggestive criterion by which we can study and analyse the global travels of Irish classicism – and that in that study and analysis we find a suggestive method for reading relationships of reception and influence between Western and non-Western literatures.

In two important case studies in the history of the global reception of Joycean classicism, located in Argentine modernist networks and in the emergent tradition of the

Anglophone Indian novel, we find Joyce's particular form of classicism marshalled in distinctive, syncretic ways that challenge easy narratives of the global diffusion of Joyce's influence. In the former case, the meaning of Joycean classicism is contested as it becomes the site of Argentina's culture war, while in the latter a particularly Ovidian interpretation of Joyce is upheld in Rushdie's construction of a literary tradition – the Anglophone Indian novel – to which Joyce's own work cannot by definition belong. Most importantly, while both case studies tell us a great deal about the global migrations of Irish classicism, analysis of them requires a methodology that circumvents the problems of reading *for* positive evidence of influence, Joycean specifically and classical generally – and to this end I begin with proposals for a methodology of classical reception study that centres the aesthetic claims of the culture under influence.

Methodological considerations

It is not enough to demonstrate Joyce's global influence by holding up examples of allusions to him across non-Western cultures. While it is vital to distinguish between allusions and influence, the former not necessarily being proof of the latter, it is equally important to reckon with Joyce's uncommonly broad global cultural presence. The cultural mission of Ireland's embassies and Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, in their long history of promoting Bloomsday events outside of Europe and North America; references to Joyce across US culture, such as Eve Arnold's famous photograph of Marilyn Monroe reading the final episode, or Captain Picard's copy of *Ulysses* in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, or politician Pete Buttigieg's 2019 memoir *The Shortest Way Home*, which takes its title from Bloom's musing that 'the longest way round is the shortest way home' in 'Nausicaa' (Joyce 1986, 13.1110-1); the emergence of '*Ulysses*-truthers' in Corbyn-era British political culture;[2] the burlesque of *Ulysses*' cachet in online meme culture —[3] such diverse global engagements with Joyce's *Ulysses* attest to its cultural prominence. In themselves, these examples are arguably unremarkable. This is not to say, of course, that the study of Joyce's global reception and influence is not a valid and necessary part of academic study, especially in the fields of classical reception, Irish culture and global modernism – but, rather, that studies of Joyce's global reception and influence cannot rely straightforwardly on positive evidence of allusion for a compelling claim. In the world we live in, it would be stranger *not* to see references to the Simpson family encounter a *Ulysses* reading group ('434: In the Name of the Grandfather', 2009) in *The Simpsons* (Season 15) or to hear of long-running Joyce societies in East Asia, such as the James Joyce Society of Korea (founded in 1977) and the James Joyce Society of Japan (founded in 1989).

Diffusionist models of literary history are often guilty of over-valuing such positive evidence, and there is certainly a history of literary critics making methodologically problematic diffusionist claims about Joyce's influence. Diffusionism, a term popularized by J. M. Blaut in *The Colonizer's Model of the World* (1993), refers to models of cultural change by which ideas diffuse from the centre to the periphery, and in literary history

has been used to describe the development of literature across the globe, most famously by Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova. For example, Moretti's influential work on world literature began by taking as its first principle the following claim: 'in cultures that belong to the periphery of the literary system (which means: almost all cultures, inside and outside Europe), the modern novel first arises not as an autonomous development but as a compromise between a western formal influence (usually French or English) and local materials' (Moretti 2000: 58). Equally, Casanova, in her elaborate theory of the 'world literary space', depends at times on Eurocentric models of the diffusion of innovation, above all in her discussion of 'The Joycean Family' (Casanova 2004: 330–6). In literary historical work that imagines Joyce as a force in the diffusion of influence from Europe to the rest of the world, claims that place a burden of proof on allusions to Joyce in non-Western texts, or the reading of non-Western texts as imitating something 'Joycean', can be at worst either culturally imperialist or historically misleading narratives. As an example of the former, Charles R. Larson's *The Emergence of African Fiction*, for example, made an infamously poor claim for Joyce's influence on Ayi Kwei Armah that defined modernism in terms of proximity to Europe (Larson 1972: 268).[4] As an example of the latter, Moretti's *Distant Reading* proposes that the influence of Joyce is such that he creates one of the two paths open to novelists in the twentieth century (the other path is created by Kafka) (Moretti 2013: 28–9) – a model of literary history that is so simplistic, and requires reading at such a vast distance, that it resists any practical utility. In both cases, positive evidence of Joycean influence does not necessarily mean much in a culture where Joyce's presence is ubiquitous – and claims resting on it can enable poorly evidenced diffusionist narratives of literary history, not to mention reading filters so occluded as to find or assume evidence of Joycean influence where there is none.

Recent work in global modernist studies, drawing heavily on the critiques of non-European critics and authors, has challenged diffusionism in literary history extensively. As Jahan Ramazani points out (2016: 127), 'To reduce world literary transmission to this single structure [diffusion] is to occlude the mutually transformative nature of intercultural literary dialogue.' Building on this, Alys Moody and Stephen J. Ross argue, in the introduction to their major anthology *Global Modernists on Modernism* (2019: 4), that accounts of global modernism that treat modernism as a period or a style 'tend to produce a kind of cultural imperialism' because they 'typically cast non-European art and literature as secondary, derivative products, whose status as modernist is determined by their relation to the standard of European modernism'. Even as it bears on the case of Joyce and (global) modernism, this claim can be scaled up to refer to 'world literature' as such: if studies of Joyce's global reception and influence fail to develop 'mutually transformative … intercultural literary dialogue', then they risk reproducing 'a kind of cultural imperialism'. Studying the global afterlives of Joycean classicism should really tell us more than the fact that Joyce's version of classical reception is itself widely received – an observation too obvious to merit much discussion – and it surely must avoid embroiling itself in cultural imperialism. What are the stakes of Joycean classicism beyond Western Europe – and how does Joyce's international reception bear back on our understanding of Irish classicism as such?

One method by which we can begin to answer these questions, and ensure that this study does not become one-sided or engaged in diffusionist claims, is to begin any study of the reception and influence of Joycean classicism from the aesthetic and aesthetic claims of those sites of reception and influence. The reason for this is that non-European literatures, and minoritized literatures more broadly, are often introduced to academic and institutional study under the rubric of 'diversity'. As Kandice Chuh has argued (2019: 17), when this is the case, such texts are typically 'framed and studied in terms of authenticity, racism, and resistance rather than literariness per se'. Within this framing, canonical authors, like Joyce, are typically associated with literary and aesthetic greatness, while minoritized authors are seen as valuable in terms of their representations of 'difference' and are read primarily in terms of their 'politics'. 'Greatness' and 'difference' are presented as divergent, incompatible concepts, aligned respectively with 'aesthetics' and 'politics'. If we want to make a claim about the global significance of Irish classicism, it is vital to employ a paradigm that builds from the distinct aesthetic practices of minoritized literatures. As Chuh writes (2019: 17), 'Critically discussed and institutionally valued through standards of authenticity and bureaucratic investments in diversity, the distinctively aesthetic qualities of [minoritized literatures] and the metacritical questions of whether or to what ends it is important to study those distinctive qualities has been underaddressed.' By centring those 'distinctively aesthetic qualities' and engaging with those 'metacritical questions', we can make claims about the relationship between European and non-European literatures that are neither diffusionist nor, by virtue of their attention to aesthetics, invested in the discourse of bureaucratic diversity.

In previous work (Ward 2022), I have sought to argue for studying Joyce's global afterlives by centring the aesthetics and aesthetic claims of the author bearing Joyce's reception and influence by taking an analytical lens to the text itself. Looking at Caribbean author Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, I proposed that Selvon's 'creative disaffiliation' from Joyce made for one model of studying Joyce's afterlife while unsettling the terms of his hypercanonicity (Ward 2022: 342–3). In terms of Joyce studies, the afterlives of Joycean classicism present an interesting opportunity to expand the analytical lens beyond that of the text itself; this is because, as we will see, engagements with Joycean classicism are not always best perceived at the level of the single text. As such, in the case studies that follow I look to analyse aesthetics and aesthetic claims at scales broader than those offered by a literary text alone. In terms of Borges and Marechal, this is best perceived by considering how Joyce's Argentine reception was characterized by polarization among the network of Argentine writers in Buenos Aires in the period 1920–50. In terms of Rushdie's theory of the Anglophone Indian novel, it is best perceived by considering how the aesthetic claims of his literary criticism work to imagine an emergent tradition.

Network: Buenos Aires, 1920–50

As modernist studies has sought to expand its archive to include wider temporalities and geographies in recent decades, the 'network' has become an increasingly useful unit of

analysis. Indeed, networks, both institutional and social, can afford highly suggestive narratives of modernism's history and global emergence.[5] In Joyce studies specifically, this attention to networks has helped to demystify Joyce's widespread influence across Latin America. Following the lead of Latin American 'boom' authors themselves, critics, such as Emir Rodríguez Monegal (1972), Robin W. Fiddian (1982, 1989) and Gerald Martin (1989) have tended to understand '*Joyceización*' (Fiddian 1989, 23) at a regional, pan-Latin American level. For instance, at an international symposium, held in Cuba in 1968 to discuss the impact of Julio Cortázar's early 'boom' novel *Rayuela* (1963; *Hopscotch*, trans. Gregory Rabassa, 1966), the poet Roberto Fernández Retamar argued that *Rayuela* 'is for Latin Americans what *Ulysses* is for writers of the English language' (Simó et al. 1968: 25, trans. Novillo-Corvalán 2008: 57), demonstrating the extent to which Joyce was held up by *boomistas* as a point of comparison with pan-Latin American significance. The novelist José Lezama Lima, author of *Paradiso* (1966; *Paradise*, trans. Gregory Rabassa, 1974), went on to insist that *Rayuela*'s most obvious precursor was Leopoldo Marechal's *Adán Buenosayres* (1948; *Adam Buenosayres*, trans. Norman Cheadle, 2014), which was itself influenced by *Ulysses* and will be discussed in further detail below.

As César Salgado has commented (2014: xi):

> In a near-perfect convergence of international academic and market interests, middlebrow and highbrow print cultures, modernist and postmodernist aesthetics, Cold War hegemonies and decolonization struggles, and cosmopolitan and postcolonial agendas, a metropolitan and peripheral James Joyce became a key point of reference in the writings of Iberian and Ibero-American pre-boom, boom, and post-boom authors . . .

In more recent years, and especially in the major collection *TransLatin Joyce* (Price, Salgado and Schwartz 2014) and the scholarship in its wake, Anglophone critics have begun to consider in finer detail the local specifics of Joyce's reception and influence. While Joyce was certainly a 'key point of reference' for Latin Americans, he was never neutrally so – and, as the scholar and translator Norman Cheadle (2014) demonstrates in his work on the networks that shaped and marshalled *Ulysses*' reception in Argentina, he was never above being appropriated by a local culture war. Looking closely at Joyce's early reception by the literary network in Buenos Aires through the lens of the rivalry between Jorge Luis Borges and Leopoldo Marechal, the polarized ways in which Joyce and *Ulysses* were understood demonstrates not just how *Ulysses* became a site of the culture war between liberal cosmopolitan and Catholic nationalist groups, but how it can be used to understand the polarization of aesthetic judgement between these two groups.

Roughly coextensive with the period following the publication of Joyce's *Ulysses*, first printed in its final form in 1922, Buenos Aires in the 1920s experienced something of a golden age in Argentine literature, epitomized by its extremely dynamic scene of little magazines, such as *Proa* (1924–6), *Martín Fierro* (1924–7) and *Sur* (1930–92).[6] These publications contributed a great deal to establishing the literary culture that would go on

to experience the *década infame* of the 1930s, which began with a coup d'état in 1930 and culminated in the rise of Juan Perón in 1943. These decades saw Buenos Aires, and Argentina at large, experience immense social and political instability, and serious cultural division, as the country polarized between (broadly speaking) liberal, Europhile cosmopolitanism and Catholic, Hispanophile nationalism. Borges and Marechal were two of the most significant writers of the period, and were initially 'friends who wrote admiring reviews of each other's books of poetry' and even briefly collaborators in political campaigning, jointly founding the Intellectuals' Committee for the Re-election of Hipólito Yrigoyen, with Borges as president and Marechal as vice-president (Cheadle 2014b: xvii). They ended up on opposite sides of the divide as their network balkanized, however. Borges settled on the liberal cosmopolitan side and became the figurehead of an alienated literary establishment that maintained an ongoing war of words against what they saw as the 'Nazi-Fascist-Peronist dictatorship', while Marechal settled on the Catholic nationalist side, eventually becoming a Peronist functionary (Cheadle 2014b: xvii). While the story of their initial friendship in the 1920s and mutual estrangement thereafter affords a microcosm of the impact of the *década infame* on literary culture in Buenos Aires, for our purposes it is particularly interesting to see the way that the reception of Joyce and *Ulysses* figured in their mutual antagonism. Borges and Marechal were, I contend, locked in a sort of tug of war with *Ulysses*, in which each tried to pull the text in the direction they thought appropriate, while each struggled to work out his conflicted reaction to the author.

The politics of translation was a key factor in this. Borges was able to read Joyce without the medium of translation, and claimed in a review of *Ulysses* for *Proa* in 1925 to be 'the first traveler from the Hispanic world to set foot upon the shores of *Ulysses*' (trans. Suzanne Jill Levine; Borges 2000: 12), and included after that review a creative translation of the novel's final page (trans. Jorge Luis Borges; Joyce 1925). Marechal, by contrast, experienced Joyce in various translations. Firstly, and 'very attentively', he read Alonso Dámaso's 1926 Spanish translation of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, then the first few chapters of the French translation of *Ulysses* that had been made under Valery Larbaud's supervision and published in 1929. He ultimately finished reading *Ulysses* in 1945, the year that the Argentine José Salas Subirat's Spanish translation was published in Buenos Aires (Cheadle 2014b: xv). As Cheadle has noted, an after-effect of the falling out between Borges and Marechal is the 'Borgocentric "official story"' (Cheadle 2014a: 57) that has pervaded study of Joyce's reception in Latin America, particularly in the Anglophone West. This account takes Borges' creative translation in *Proa* as the primary or originary event in Joyce's dissemination among Latin American literary networks and in his influence on the mid-century *boomistas*, while overlooking Marechal's own deep and substantive engagement with Joyce – even as the *boomistas* themselves insisted on the influence of Marechal on their work.[7] This 'Borgocentrism' risks understanding Joyce's Latin American influence in terms that overlook the fact that Borges represented only one side in a culture war. It further risks defining *Joyceización* according to what Borges valued in Joyce – the plenitude of Joycean language – over and against what Marechal found so energizing – Joyce's bathetic and subversive classicism as a part of his maximalism.

In 1948, Marechal published a consummately Joycean novel entitled *Adán Buenosayres*, and its reception was, as Cheadle explains, negatively affected by the polarized context into which it was published. The novel is focused on the titular Adam Buenosayres, and concerns both his unrequited love for his Beatrice-like Solveig Amundsen and the picaresque tales of seven characters who each resemble composite figures or caricatures of avant-garde writers and artists of 1920s Buenos Aires; the first five books follow Adam and his friends around the city, while the latter two are presented as 'found manuscripts' narrated by Adam himself. The novel's connections to Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* are clear – it is a *Künstlerroman* that takes place in a highly concentrated period of time within a city – and Marechal was not shy about the connection to Joyce. He described his novel as:

> . . . a gigantic autobiography linked to the life of the city. I consider it a key novel, its architecture Mediterranean and Latin, free in its language, [based] on the Aristotelian canons of the epic form. The Mediterranean novel is the modern epic and must continue in this line. Perhaps the only one who may be considered an interpreter of this way of feeling is James Joyce.
>
> *Andrés 1968: 81, trans. Cheadle 2014b: 624–5, n. 13*

Joyce's value, for Marechal, was primarily in his classicism – and in this regard, he expressed a creative kinship with him. But, as Cheadle notes, although the 'Joycean lineage' would be used to heap praise on a writer like Julio Cortázar twenty years later, it was used to bring 'mostly scorn' upon Marechal (Cheadle 2014b: xvi). In a review for *Sur* in 1949, Eduardo González Lanuza described *Adam Buenosayres* as an imitation of *Ulysses* that had been 'abundantly spattered with manure' that would be left to 'corrode for centuries in the dust of the libraries' (quoted in Cheadle 2014b: xvi), while Enrique Anderson-Imbert condemned it as 'a mess with ugliness and even obscenities that could not be justified in any way even as the author hides himself behind the name of Joyce' (quoted in Lafforgue 1998; my translation). The extreme reaction against Marechal's novel and its engagement with Joyce protests too much. As Cheadle argues (2014b: xvi), 'The violence and incoherence of their *ad hominem* attacks are clear signs that something more than differences in sensibility and literary taste was at stake here.' Certainly, these comments are difficult to take as aesthetic judgements, but, for our purposes, they illustrate how Joyce's classicism became appropriated as a dividing line among his Argentine readership. Indeed, González Lanuza and Anderson-Imbert do not disparage Joyce or Joycean influence as such but imply that Marechal has valued Joyce incorrectly: if *Adam Buenosayres* was evidently the work of an author who valued Joyce *on account of* his classicism, those on the other side of the divide were writers and readers who valued Joyce *in spite of* it.

The best expression of these polarized valuations of Joyce came in the very different summations of Joyce's work published on his death in 1941 by Marechal and Borges. In an article for the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nación* that February, Marechal framed Joyce's achievement in terms of his maximalism:

> . . . at the end of the tale, the astute reader discovers that *Ulysses* is something less than an epic poem and something more than a novel (couldn't the same be said of *Don Quixote*?).
>
> I am not alluding here to the more or less veiled correspondences that Joyce's *Ulysses* could have with Homer's *Odyssey* and which so many critics go on about . . . Joyce manages to alter the true stature of his characters, giving them what I would call a certain 'heroic magnitude' and making them, not better than they are, as Aristotle wanted (because Joyce lacks any moral or moralizing intention), but 'larger' or, if you like, 'broader'. For this he sometimes uses the natural tone of the epic, even in its most archaic verbal forms; or he introduces into the text, unusually, heroic figures and scenes that have only a vague relationship of similarity with such a character or such a Homeric episode; or he adopts, finally, the disproportionate technique of the master Rabelais, to the point of giving his work the contours of a grotesque 'gigantomachy'.
>
> *Marechal 1969; my translation*

For Marechal, the significance of Joyce's Homeric correspondences is not their centrality but their disruption of the otherwise 'natural tone of the epic', which thereby creates room for a kind of Rabelaisian maximalism; indeed, his reference to gigantomachy insists on the value and challenge of Joyce's work as a gigantic rebellion against the gods.

Borges' valuation, titled 'A Fragment on Joyce' and published in *Sur* the same year, is entirely opposite to Marechal's. In his view:

> Plenitude and indigence coexist in Joyce. Lacking the capacity to construct (which his gods did not bestow on him, and which he was forced to make up for with arduous symmetries and labyrinths), he enjoyed a gift for words, a felicitous verbal omnipotence that can without exaggeration or imprecision be likened to *Hamlet* or the *Urn Burial* . . .
>
> *Borges 2000: 221; trans. Esther Allen*

For Borges, Joyce's value is at the smaller scale of the word – an observation perhaps unsurprising from a writer famed for short stories and fragments writing an article that identifies itself as a 'fragmento'. Indeed, Borges contends that the larger or broader elements of *Ulysses*, which Marechal praises as his gigantomachy, are ultimately pedestrian:

> Everyone knows that Joyce's book is indecipherably chaotic to the unprepared reader. Everyone knows that Stuart Gilbert, [*Ulysses*'] official interpreter, has revealed that each of the novel's eighteen chapters corresponds to an hour of the day, a bodily organ, an art, a symbol, a color, a literary technique, and one of the adventures of Ulysses . . . *Ulysses* (as everyone knows) is the story of a single day, within the perimeter of a single city.
>
> *Borges 2000: 221; trans. Esther Allen*

Though Borges ostensibly rejects the same critical obsession with *Ulysses*' Homeric correspondences as Marechal, describing it as at once 'the most widely praised' and 'the most meaningless', he goes a step further, casting it as a banality that, unlike his '[f]ar more admirable' linguistic prowess, everyone already knows about (Borges 2000: 221; trans. Esther Allen). While Marechal saw Joyce's classicism as a significant component of Joyce's maximalism, Borges saw it as 'indigence', and in any case a distraction from the serious appreciation of the 'Plenitude' of Joyce's language. In this, what Cheadle characterizes as Borges' 'polemical animus' (Cheadle 2014a: 71) boils over in an acutely snarky footnote implying that readers of Joyce in French translation could never appreciate such 'Plenitude': 'The French version is rather unfortunate … The fault, of course, lies with the language, which is incapable of compound words' (Borges 2000: 221; trans. Esther Allen). Alluding to the fact that those on the Catholic nationalist side of the cultural divide were, like Marechal, less likely to speak and read English and therefore more likely to have read Joyce in French translation, Borges implicitly proposes that his political enemies are simply unable to perceive what is truly valuable about Joyce, which leads them to appreciate merely that which 'everyone knows'. As Cheadle argues (2014a: 71), Borges' 'Fragment on Joyce' is 'engaged in the ideological struggle contemporaneously being waged in Argentina' and does the work of 'tracing and indicting the ideological network of the enemy'.

The literary network in Buenos Aires from 1920 to 1950 is thus a particularly notable example of the global travels of Irish classicism: in its Joycean manifestation, Irish classicism ends up in modernist Buenos Aires as an aesthetic dividing line in Argentina's culture war, signifying, on Marechal's side, gigantomachy and new possibilities for the novel, and, on Borges', the aesthetic manifestation of the ideological wrongs of the Catholic nationalists. Importantly, this case does more than attest to the global prevalence of Irish classicism: it helps us to complicate and surpass some of the limitations that the 'Borgocentric "official story"' has placed on the study of Joyce's importance to Argentine literature, and Latin American literature more broadly. Indeed, rather than see Joyce's classicism as in any sense unremarkable, Marechal's *Adam Buenosayres* and his literary criticism affords us a path by which to understand how a different interpretation of Joycean classicism not only flourished beyond Borges' network but arguably influenced the maximalist aesthetics of the mid-century *boomistas*. As the Mexican *boomista* Fernando del Paso wrote:

> … I believe that what most disgusted the critics of the time was Leopoldo Marechal's intention to create a microcosm. The novel as *summa* – that claims to cover everything – usually annoys critics and novelists, perhaps, I think, because the author's attitude is confused with the deepest of Helicon's deadly sins: pride. I, having always shared with Marechal that obsession with the *novela total*, do not condemn him. I leave that for those who exclaim, like the rat considering the size of the elephant in *Adam Buenosayres*, 'This is an insult!'.
>
> *del Paso 2000: 22; my translation*

In the years following del Paso's intervention, Marechal's international reputation has grown and come to be understood beyond the Argentine culture wars, owing especially to his inclusion in Moretti's monumental collaborative history of the novel (Franco 2006) and Cheadle's English translation and extensive scholarship. Keeping our critical eyes on Marechal's history in those culture wars, however, provides a much richer picture of one of the journeys of Irish classicism.

Tradition: the Anglophone Indian novel

If the modernist literary networks in Buenos Aires afford a means to elaborate the opposing aesthetic valuations of, and claims for, Joycean classicism by Borges and Marechal, Salman Rushdie's literary-critical construction of a literary-historical 'tradition' of the Anglophone Indian novel offers a suggestive complement. For Rushdie, G. V. Desani is a crucial component of the Anglophone Indian literary tradition as such; but Rushdie's valuation of Desani takes place in terms of Joycean classicism. Accordingly, Rushdie's particular interpretation of Joyce's classicism becomes part of his widely circulating claim about the aesthetics of the Anglophone Indian novel. In this, we once again find Joycean classicism enabling the critical study of the distinct aesthetic practices of minoritized literatures.

G. V. Desani was a British Indian novelist, poet and educator, and is best remembered for his 1948 novel, *All About H. Hatterr*, which stands as a major text at the juncture between late modernist and emergent postcolonial aesthetic experimentation. *Hatterr* is a picaresque *Bildungsroman*, in which its mixed European and Malay protagonist tries to learn about life, including by taking what Priyamvada Gopal describes as 'a reverse ethnography on the ways of the Occidental people' (Gopal 2009: 92). The novel received an amusingly equivocal endorsement from T. S. Eliot – 'In all my experience, I have not met with anything like it' (quoted in Gopal 2009: 92) – and a ringing one from Anthony Burgess, who praised its language as 'a sort of creative chaos that grumbles at the restraining banks … not pure English; it is, like the English of Shakespeare, Joyce and Kipling, gloriously impure' (Burgess 1972: 10). Desani's hybrid English – what Hatterr himself, at one point, calls 'rigmarole English, staining your goodly godly tongue' (Desani 1972: 37) – is indeed the most striking aspect of the novel. Ankhi Mukherjee (2013: 153) describes it as a 'mess of Babu English, Queen's English, bazaar-talk … crammed with puns, riddles, jokes, malapropisms, ephemera from regional languages (English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Tamil), classical allusions, and Anglo-Indian argot'. As Srinivas Aravamudan has noted (1998: 97), reviews of the 1970 reissue of *Hatterr* collectively recognized in Desani's hybrid language a '"Joycean" sensiblity'. Arguably, Desani solicited this response in the reissue's preface, in which he makes an oblique reference to a lesson gleaned from the travails of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, protagonist of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and subject of anonymous rumours published in the newspaper: 'the Irishman's said, the only way to deal with an anonymous letter is to leave it unopen' (Desani 1972: 21).

For Rushdie, though, Desani's experimentation with linguistic hybridity is the salient point of *Hatterr*, rather than any explicit Joyceanism per se. Rushdie, in a much-quoted comment from his preface to a co-edited anthology of postcolonial Indian writing, makes Desani a fork in the path of the entire tradition of Anglophone Indian prose:

> The most significant writers of this first generation, R. K. Narayan and G. V. Desani, have had opposite careers. . . . Milan Kundera once said that all modern literature descends from either Richardson's *Clarissa* or Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, and if Narayan is India's Richardson then Desani is his Shandean other. *Hatterr*'s dazzling, puzzling, leaping prose is the first genuine effort to go beyond the Englishness of the English language. His central figure, 'fifty-fifty of the species', the half-breed as unabashed hero, leaps and capers behind many of the texts in this book. . . . My own writing, too, learned a trick or two from him.
>
> *Rushdie 1997: xv–xvi*

So where does Joyce come into this? In Aravamudan's view (1998: 98), 'Desani's relationship to Joyce is one of creative affiliation, as is Salman Rushdie's'. Although Aravamudan's own reading of the creative relationship between Joyce and Desani is different from that of Rushdie,[8] this is a useful framework with which to understand how Rushdie's valuation of Desani is mediated by his understanding of Joyce. Indeed, in an interview with the Dutch literary critic Margot Dijkgraaf, Rushdie praised Joyce in very similar terms to those with which he valued Desani:

> Joyce spoke against the politicizing of literature, but his language is a purposeful attempt to create an English which was just not a property of the English. He employs a lot of borrowed words from other European languages and creates an un-English kind of English.
>
> *Rushdie in Dijkgraaf 2017*

Just as Rushdie values Desani for 'going beyond the Englishness of the English language', he sees Joyce as creating 'an un-English kind of English': both authors, for Rushdie, are significant for making something new of English, and, in a sense, asserting ownership over the colonizer's tongue. If Rushdie 'learned a trick or two' from Desani, it is suggestive that his most sustained engagement with those tricks, in his 1988 novel *The Satanic Verses*, comes through a mediation of Joycean classicism. Indeed, it is as if, for Rushdie, the language of *Hatterr* seems to deliver on a promise to South Asians that Joyce's language makes to the Irish: the promise of newness and hybridity.

In his history of the Anglophone Indian novel, Rushdie makes clear that his own work sits on Desani's side of the family tree: and it is in Rushdie's own fiction, particularly *The Satanic Verses*, that we see how the value he attaches to newness and hybridity is in fact mediated by his reading of Joyce's classicism specifically. As has been well documented, *The Satanic Verses* sparked enormous hostility from certain extremist circles due to its

perceived blasphemy against Islam, including threats on Rushdie's life, attacks on publishers, the firebombing of Riverdale Press, and the assassination of Hitoshi Igarashi, his Japanese translator, and the attack on Rushdie in Chautauqua, New York in 2022. In an article defending his novel as a work undertaken 'in good faith', Rushdie wrote:

> *The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. Mélange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it. *The Satanic Verses* is for change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love-song to our mongrel selves.
>
> *Rushdie 2010: 394*

In this defence of his novel, Rushdie is effectively aligning himself with Desani's use of language and culture in *Hatterr* – the phrase 'our mongrel selves' resonates with Rushdie's description of Hatterr as an 'unabashed half-breed' – and, ultimately, we see Rushdie play this out in the novel at length. In 'A City Visible but Unseen', for example, Rushdie establishes the contrast between Lucretius and Ovid on the 'Question of mutability of the essence of the self' as one of the key frames of the novel. Muhammad Sufyan, consoling Saladin Chamcha as he gradually metamorphoses into a goat-like demon, explains that:

> . . . great Lucretius tells us, in *De Rerum Natura*, this following thing: *quodcumque suis mutatum finibus exit, continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante*. Which being translated, forgive my clumsiness, is 'Whatever by its changing goes out of its frontiers,' – that is, bursts its banks, – or, maybe, breaks out of its limitations, – so to speak, disregards its own rules, but that is too free, I am thinking . . . 'that thing', at any rate, Lucretius holds, 'by doing so brings immediate death to its old self'. However . . . poet Ovid, in the *Metamorphoses*, takes diametrically opposed view. He avers thus: 'As yielding wax' – heated, you see, possibly for the sealing of documents or such, – 'is stamped with new designs and changes shape and seems not still the same, Yet is indeed the same, even so our souls,' – you hear, good sir? Our spirits! Our immortal essences! – 'Are still the same forever, but adopt in their migrations ever-varying forms. . . . For me it is always Ovid over Lucretius . . . Your soul, my good poor dear sir, is the same. Only in its migration it has adopted this presently varying form.
>
> *Rushdie 1998: 276–7*

For Rushdie too, Ovid triumphs over Lucretius: the novel valorizes the hybridity created by migration as 'how newness enters the world', and the Ovidian image of 'yielding wax' recurs throughout the narrative, most conspicuously in one of the novel's clearest allusions to Joyce.

In 'The Angel Azraeel', Rushdie briefly features a Black British Police Inspector named Stephen Kinch, an allusion to Stephen Dedalus, central character of Joyce's *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, who is nicknamed 'Kinch'. Rushdie's Kinch appears in his role as 'community liaison' following the death of a local Black activist:

> The death of Dr. Uhuru Simba, formerly Sylvester Roberts, while in custody awaiting trial, was described by Brickhall constabulary's community liaison officer, a certain Inspector Stephen Kinch, as 'a million-to-one shot.' . . . The dead man's miniscule mother, Antionette Roberts . . . was not slow to seize upon Inspector Kinch's words and hurl them back into his florid, loose-chinned, impotent face, whose hangdog expression bore witness to the humiliation of being referred to by his brother officers as *n*********** and, worse, *mushroom*, meaning that he was permanently kept in the dark, and from time to time – for example in the present regrettable circumstances – people threw shit all over him.
>
> *Rushdie 1988: 449*

Stephen Dedalus is first introduced as a character in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, originally published in 1916, which opens with an epigraph from Ovid – '*Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes*' ('And he sets his mind to unknown arts'; Joyce 1992). Despite Stephen Dedalus' reduced status in the later *Ulysses*, he nevertheless holds much of the novel's weight of expectation. In the 'Ithaca' episode, Stephen stands as 'a superior intelligence' on which 'human existence' might depend to 'amend many social conditions', in the mind of protagonist Leopold Bloom (Joyce 1986, 17.990-1, 1008). In PI Stephen Kinch, Rushdie imagines a version of Stephen that has squandered his potential by setting his mind to the task of integration rather than the 'unknown arts' of bringing newness into the world. Stripped of everything but his perpetual outsiderness, PI Stephen Kinch loses the Ovidian surname of his forebear, which referenced the story of Daedalus, a master craftsman with wax, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He is left saddled with the nickname 'Kinch'. Rushdie chooses to give as a negative example of the twentieth-century migrant in Britain a character who resembles Stephen Dedalus if he abandoned his potential in order to fit in with the prevailing power structures – and in this provides a testament to the centrality of Joycean classicism in his understanding of hybridity, newness and the political potential of the Anglophone Indian novel. When taken alongside the novel's other references to Joyce, it is clear that for Rushdie, Joyce's legacy is, just like Desani's, tremendously enabling of the hybridity that Sufyan values so highly in his interpretation of Ovid.

Joyce's classicism beyond Europe: conclusions

This chapter has examined the 'migration' of Joyce's *Ulysses* into global literature through two cases studies from different time periods and cultures. It has been argued that, much as Joyce's reception and influence can at times feel universal, the cases of the literary

network of Buenos Aires in 1920–50 and the literary tradition of the Anglophone Indian novel hint at the syncretism that always determines the nature of that reception and influence. Over several decades in Argentina, from the 1920s to the 1950s (and beyond), the cultural capital represented by Joyce's classicism was co-opted in opposite directions by rivals in the culture wars represented by Jorge Luis Borges on the one hand and Leopoldo Marechal on the other. While the latter praised the epic scale of Joyce's work and mined it for his own *Ulysses*-inspired novel *Adan Buenosayres* (1948), Borges rejected the large scale and found greater value in Joyce's linguistic minutiae. It is similarly at the linguistic level, this time the linguistic diversity and hybridity developed by Joyce in *Ulysses*, that Salman Rushdie reads G. V. Desani's engagement with *Ulysses* in *All About H. Hatterr* (1948) when analysing the tradition of the Anglophone Indian novel. In his own *Satanic Verses* (1988), Rushdie goes on to invoke Joyce's use of Ovid to precisely the same ends as Desani in *Hatterr*.

It has been suggested here that the impact of Joycean classicism is an important part of the story of Irish classicism. At the same time, I have sought to demonstrate the necessity of critical methods that do not overvalue Joyce on account of his cultural prominence. By working at the levels of the literary network and the literary tradition, we find two scales at which Joyce's reception and influence beyond Europe can be studied that circumvent the 'standards of authenticity and bureaucratic investments in diversity' (Chuh 2019: 17) which can plague efforts to study non-European literatures in the light of European cultures.

Notes

1. Recent accounts of Joyce's global reception and influence include Lawrence 1998; Freedman 2010; Goldman 2014; Price, Salgado and Schwartz 2014; Carpentier 2015; and Ward 2022.
2. The term '*Ulysses*-truthers' refers to a group of journalists, commentators and literary critics in Britain who generated news stories every Bloomsday between 2016 and 2019 to express doubt that the then Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn could have read, let alone enjoyed, *Ulysses*, a book he has publicly stated to be his favourite. See Foster 2016.
3. '18 Wheels: One for Every Chapter . . .' 2016: https://www.facebook.com/clickhole/photos/a.1461385317435063/1672410242999235/?type=3; with thanks to Kieran Devlin for informing me of this meme's provenance.
4. For Armah's response, see Armah 1977. For brief summaries of the significance of this incident, see Wollaeger 2018: 55; Moody and Ross 2019: 4–5.
5. See, for example, the recent spate of publications on the networks created by the BBC (Avery 2006; Kalliney 2013; Griffith 2016), or on social networks such as the much-mythologized Bloomsbury Group (Ryan and Ross 2020), or the salons of Gertrude Stein, Natalie Clifford Barney and the Stettheimer sisters (Olsen 2017). On the 'network' of purchasers of first editions of Joyce's *Ulysses*, see Crowley Chapter 15, this volume.
6. Many of these are collected at the digital archive Archivo Histórico de Revistas Argentinas: https://ahira.com.ar/.
7. For example, in addition to Lezama Lima's aforementioned comment at the 1968 conference in Cuba, in the late 1990s Fernando del Paso, author of *Palinuro de México* and *Noticias del*

Imperio, published a major statement on *Adán*'s significance to the 'novela total': 'I believe that after what I have written and said, few would be able to doubt that I am not only an admirer but a devout admirer and a staunch defender of *Adam Buenosayres*' (del Paso 2000: 25; my translation).

8. For Aravamudan, the significance of Desani is that he exceeds Joyce: 'Desani mak[es] good on the unkept promise of modernist iconoclasm made by an earlier Joyce/Stephen . . . Joyce's syncretism succeeds in establishing the global phenomenon that we call aesthetic modernism. . . . In his turn, Desani is all iconoclast' (Aravamudan 1998: 98–9).

CHAPTER 17
MIGRATION AND EXILE IN SEAMUS HEANEY'S VIRGILIAN PASTORAL

Rachel Falconer

In the mid-1990s, Seamus Heaney began experimenting with pastoral, composing a series of Theocritean sonnets and Virgilian eclogues which would eventually be collected in his millennial volume, *Electric Light* (2001a). His Virgilian eclogues, composed just after the Good Friday Agreement, explore the possibilities of peace within a culture already acclimatized to violence. In the darker climate of the months following 9/11, he then developed his ideas about pastoral in general, in an array of essays, lectures and interviews.[1] For Heaney, pastoral has a built-in resilience, a 'staying power', that can be transmitted to its audience whether in times of fragile peace, or in the midst of war. In other words, pastoral is a prime example of the way poetry, by virtue of being 'a whole thing, a hale thing, a thing formally and feelingly sound . . . within itself', can have a curative effect on fragmented communities and individual psyches (Heaney 2002a: 8, 10, quoting Robert Frost 1939). In this chapter, I would like to demonstrate how Heaney's Virgilian pastoral poems accommodate the modern experience of migrancy and exile. In the final section, I will briefly contrast these pastoral poems with the poetics of pastoral explored more programmatically in Heaney's prose writing.[2]

Before turning to the poems themselves, it may be helpful to identify three distinct but overlapping ways in which Heaney associates Virgilian pastoral with the modern experience of migrancy and exile. At the most personal level, he sees his boyhood departure from the primary, rural world of his childhood as a first step towards migrant alienation. And he comes to identify with Virgil as a country boy who was forced for personal and artistic reasons to leave the Mantuan countryside for the ancient cultural centres of Rome and Naples. Secondly, he relates Virgil's experience of civil war in the 40s BCE to Northern Ireland's twentieth-century history of sectarian conflict. And thirdly, in more general terms, he takes the herdsmen in Virgil's *Eclogues* as models for the refugee in flight from military violence, across Europe and the world, from the First World War to the present day.

We find evidence of that primary sense of living in exile in a prose poem entitled 'The wanderer', published in *Stations*, in 1975. There is no reference to a classical exemplar, nor to the pastoral genre, but there is a sense of the poet having lost his place in his childhood rural community. He recalls being given prize money by his primary school teacher after winning a place as a boarder at St Columb's College:

> . . . he called me forward and crossed my palm with silver.
> 'At the end of the holidays this man's going away to Derry,

so this is for him winning the scholarship . . .'
I have wandered far from that ring-giver and would not
renegue on this migrant solitude. I have seen halls in flames,
hearts in cinders, the benches filled and emptied, the
circles of companions called and broken. That day I was a
rich young man, . . .

Heaney 1975: 19[3]

Some of the idiomatic phrasing is lost from the typescript draft in this published version of 'The wanderer' (cf. 'The Wanderer', draft, I *Seamus Heaney Literary Papers* 1.vi. NLI). But in both versions, it is an educated, amplified eye that looks back on a lost paradise. The elegiac voice has a heroic strain ('I have seen halls in flames' and the title, borrowed from a famous Anglo-Saxon poem) that would sound alien in the rural community being elegized.[4] At the same time, local idioms continue to occupy the poet's linguistic terrain ('crossing one's palm with silver' recalling gypsy fortune-telling). Moreover, the poet's experience of estrangement goes hand in hand with a sense of obligation to do something *for* that community he has left, for he 'would not *renegue* on this migrant solitude' (my emphasis).

Published in the same year as 'The Wanderer' is a much more widely known poem, 'Exposure', which appears as the last poem in his landmark volume, *North*. Here, Heaney refers to his move from Belfast to the Republic of Ireland in 1972 as another layer of internal exile. He describes himself as an 'inner émigré' and a 'wood-kerne // Escaped from the massacre', weighing his 'responsible *tristia*', thus identifying with the exiled Roman poet Ovid, author of *Tristia*. As others have shown, Heaney also draws analogies with the First World War poet Wilfred Owen, and the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, who died in a labour camp in the 1930s, obliquely alluded to here as 'a hero / On some muddy compound' (Heaney 1975: 67).[5] For our purposes, this poem is a significant early example of the way Heaney overlayers classical analogies with those from modern history, and more particularly, with the modern Irish experience, a 'wood-kerne' being the term for an Irish foot-soldier ('kerne') or outlaw ('wood-kerne') (Russell 2014: 206).

In later years, Heaney developed a more detailed, personal identification with the Roman poet Virgil (see Falconer 2022: 1–12). At the turn of the millennium, more specifically, he identifies with Virgil as a fundamentally *pastoral* poet who was forced by historical circumstances to take stock of the War of Actium (Heaney 2007a: 153). 'Actium' becomes a metonymy for the brutal charge of history which forces a poet to take up his pen in redress.[6] In the original, longer version of 'Bann Valley Eclogue', Heaney offers the following portrait of Virgil, addressed to the Roman poet directly, in a tone of almost conspiratorial solidarity:

You were raised on the land they drove your father off.
You had his country accent and little to learn
Of the facts of life when you read your first poems out
To Octavian, feeling the length of the line

As if you were dressing husks off a hank of tow
Or measuring wheal for thatch. Holding your own

In your own way. *Pietas* and stealth. If ex-servicemen
Were cocks of the walk at home, hexameters
Would rule the roost in Rome. You would understand us
Latter-day scholarship boys and girls, on the cusp
Between elocution and *duchas.* Faces that were japed
With cowdung once now barefaced to camera, live.

Heaney 1999a, 8 Oct: ll. 19–30[7]

The classical poet's biography is clearly aligned with Heaney's own rural origins here, from the country accent to the learned education, the sense of *pietas* or devotion to a community, and of being thrust into the public limelight. The distinctly northern lexicon ('dressing husks off a hank of tow' and 'measuring wheal for thatch') not only aligns country labour practices in Mantua and Derry; it also offers verse-making as an act of complicity, on the part of both poets, with the manual labourers of their youth.[8] His own sense of affronted heritage, or '*dúchas*', when armed men patrolled his neighbourhood, is clearly being projected into Virgil's country birth-right as well. As Heaney told Dennis O'Driscoll, 'there was an affront to *dúchas* in being questioned about my name and address by these uninformed cubs in uniform at the end of my own loaning' (O'Driscoll 2009: 212).[9]

On a second level, closely connected to his personal identification with the poet himself, Heaney values Virgil's *Eclogues* as pastoral poems stemming from the experience of Roman civil war, authentically representing the actual conditions suffered by farmers and herdsmen during the years of conflict, and answering back to the violence with measured, even 'almost vindictive artistry' (O'Driscoll 2009: 389). Heaney finds direct parallels between the lives of herdsmen of Virgil's eclogues and those of Northern Irish civilians haplessly caught up in sectarian violence, from the 1960s to the late 1990s. As he puts it in a lecture delivered in Urbino, in 2001,

> Virgil saw the roads of Italy full of dispossessed labourers and erstwhile estate owners, people like Virgil's own father driven out of their holdings by Caesar's veterans, forced to yield up their homes and their land at sword-point; I have seen the streets of Belfast burn and then fill with neighbours, driven out by other neighbours.
>
> *Heaney 2007a: 153*

While his three Virgilian eclogues are structurally very different (*Eclogues IX* being a close translation, 'Glanmore Eclogue' a loose adaptation, and 'Bann Valley Eclogue' a dialogue with the Latin source text), they all privilege the perspective of local, civilian communities, divided and destroyed by military conflict. The poems centre on matters

of daily survival, and the transmission of poetry and culture, but the backdrop to all these pastoral exchanges is the remembered experience of war, as we will see below.

This brings us to a third aspect of Heaney's understanding of pastoral: as poetry that highlights the condition of migrants and refugees in flight from military conflict. Thus, he characterizes Virgil's *Eclogues* as poems about 'the troubles that farmers must face in [Virgil's] contemporary Italy. Eviction, expropriation, refugee status overnight' (Heaney 2003b: 2). These poems speak to our own times because, he continues, 'from Virgil's time to our own, the image of displaced persons on a highway, on the move with their old possessions, is as realistic as it is literary' (Heaney 2003b: 5). Heaney's Odyssean view of pastoral, as poetry about people cast adrift from their homes and culture, differs strikingly from traditional and widely accepted definitions of the genre. It is commonly understood that pastoral is a highly allusive, self-consciously literary genre, addressed to cultural and political elites, rather than actual country people. Thomas Rosenmeyer famously described the landscape of pastoral as a 'green cabinet', suggesting 'the limited confines of an interior space' (quoted by Pellicer 2022: 24). And Heaney himself admits that 'pastoral does run the danger of ending up as fine writing, of being an upholstered convention' (Heaney 2003b: 1).

For Heaney, by contrast, the generic chronotope of pastoral – that is, its dominant representation of time and space – is not an interior, upholstered space, but a rural lane, populated by country people. The country road, in both his poetry and prose poetics, is the place where songs are exchanged and where the basic vulnerabilities of rural livelihoods are exposed. His views were confirmed by reading Paul Alpers' magisterial study, *What is Pastoral?* (published in 1997), where Alpers argues that 'in their simplicity and vulnerability, [pastoral's] shepherds fittingly represent those whose lives are determined by the actions of powerful men or by events and circumstances over which they have no control' (Alpers 1997: 24). Heaney's understanding of pastoral, as a genre for and about the vulnerable lives of country people, is then developed in Heaney's later lectures into a lament for migrants dispossessed by twentieth-century war and terrorism, as we will see at the end of this chapter.

'Bann Valley Eclogue'

Heaney's 'Bann Valley Eclogue' was first published in the *Times Literary Supplement* three months before the new millennium (Heaney 1999a).[10] The poem consists of a dialogue between two figures, one named 'Virgil' and the other simply named Poet, though he is clearly an autobiographical *persona*. Quoting lines from Virgil's prophetic fourth eclogue, the two speakers speculate about the possibility of a coming Golden Age of peace. Virgil's readers had been living through a turbulent period of civil war. Having defeated his rivals at the Battle of Philippi (in 42 BCE), Octavian Augustus rewarded his soldiers with confiscated land, which led to a further escalation of violence and an attempt at containment with the Treaty of Brundisium in 40 BCE. To seal the frail peace treaty, Octavian's sister was given in marriage to his rival, Antony. Virgil's poem, which

is more an epithalamium than a traditional eclogue, prophesies the birth of a boy from this union, whose wisdom and valour would gradually usher in a magical golden age. As it happened, the treaty did not hold; the wars continued, and Octavia gave birth to a daughter, not a son. By the time Virgil published his complete Book of Eclogues, his hope for peace was already not rhyming with history. It is thought that in revising the poem, he obscured the political references and made the prophecy more far-fetched. This made it easier for medieval commentators to assimilate the fourth eclogue into a Christian framework: Virgil became a classical seer predicting the birth of Christ.

Heaney's poem celebrates the birth of a child and it ends with clear reference to the Catholic Mass; it was originally published in the months before Christmas, on the eve of the millennium. So, while not endorsing the medieval interpretation, it does not exactly refuse the prophetic resonances of the fourth eclogue either. On a personal level, the poem marks the sense of reaching an important threshold, in that Heaney turned sixty in April 1999, and he was expecting the birth of a great-niece. More significantly, the poem registers the mixed mood of hope and apprehension, following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, in Belfast, in April 1998. Finally, there was a real prospect of peace, but little certainty whether the Agreement would hold. Thus, both eclogues are uneasily balanced between hope and realism/pessimism. A stylistic sign of their uneasiness is the odd, Hellenistic mixture of grandeur and domesticity in both poems.

In 'Bann Valley', the Poet begins by expressing the wish to mark the occasion with a grand gesture of optimism. He invokes his local muses for help, 'Bann Valley Muses, give us a song worth singing' and then he appeals to his 'hedge-schoolmaster Virgil', who offers this reply:

> Here are my words you'll have to find a place for:
> *Carmen, ordo, nascitur, saeculum, gens*
> *Ferrea, aurea, aetas, scelus, Lucina*.
> Their gist in your tongue and province should be clear
> Even at this stage. Poetry, order, the times,
> The nation, wrong and renewal, iron and gold.
>
> *Heaney 1999a: ll. 7–12*[11]

Heaney lifts key words from the Latin in such a way as to turn Virgil's prediction – of gradual dawning from Iron to Golden Age – into a history of unresolved polarities. For example, when Virgil uses the word '*scelus*', crime, sin or wrong (the equivalent of *miasma* in Greek tragedy), he means to link the present civil war with the original, fratricidal *scelus* on which Rome was founded, that is, the legendary Romulus' murder of his brother, Remus. In *Eclogues IV*, the *sceleris vestigia nostri*, 'traces of our ancient crime', are washed away by the child's birth and the nation's renewal, conveyed by '*nascitur*'. Heaney finds a parallel between the ancient violence of Rome's foundation, with the centuries'-long history of violence in Northern Ireland. The Poet hears that they bear the 'Earth mark, birth mark, mould like the bloodied mould / On Romulus's ditch-back' (Heaney 1999a: ll. 32–3). In the opening lines of his poem, the disjointed noun '*scelus*' sits

ambiguously between *aetas*, the age, and *Lucina*, the Roman goddess of childbirth, whom Heaney associates with the Catholic St Anne. It is thus unclear which way the world is headed, back to war or onwards to birth and renewal. Heaney's fictional Virgil is more confident than the Irish poet, and he predicts that

> When the waters break
> Bann's stream will overflow, the old markings
> Will avail no more to keep east bank from west.
> The valley will be washed like the new baby.
>
> *Heaney 1999a: ll. 33–6*[12]

These lines allude to the Bann River's traditional division of Catholic communities on its western side from Protestants on the eastern side. Hinting at the broader scope of pastoral, Virgil dares to foresee peace between Eastern and Western Europe, and between the east and west banks of Palestine and Israel.

In *Eclogues IV* (ll. 50–1), Virgil reaches the height of optimism when he sees the whole world at peace:

> *aspice conuexo nutantem pondere mundum,*
> *terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum;*
>
> Behold the world bows with its massive dome – earth and expanse of sea and heaven's depth!
>
> *trans. Fairclough 1978: 33*

The rhythm of these lines is deliberately slow and stately. But in 'Bann Valley', the Poet cannot bring himself to believe in this global vision: '*pacatum orbem*,' he says, 'your words are too much nearly … who could match it?' Instead, he sees, much more ambiguously,

> Planet earth like a teething ring suspended
> Hangs by its world-chain.
>
> *Heaney 1999a: ll. 58–9*[13]

While the teething ring suggests a newborn globe, its suspension by a 'world-chain' indicates its continuing immersion in postlapsarian knowledge and experience of violence. The same image recurs in a darker pastoral poem, called 'Known World', which comes a few pages after 'Bann Valley', in *Electric Light*. 'Known World' is set in Macedonia, where Heaney had been in the 1970s, but it is dated 1998, that is, after the genocidal war which led to the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Here, the reference to a 'world-chain' comes at the end of a passage describing refugees fleeing from genocidal civil war:

> And now the refugees
> Come loaded on tractor mudguards and farm carts,
> On trailers, ruck-shifters, box-barrows, prams,
> On sticks, on crutches, on each other's shoulders,
> I see its coil again like a syrup of Styx,
> An old gold world-chain the world keeps falling from
> Into the cloud-boil of a camera lens.
>
> *Heaney 2001a: 20*

In 'Bann Valley', the Poet shrinks from this global prophecy and retreats into the domestic scene of the young mother, wandering in the hayfields, expecting the birth of her child. Avoiding any elevated prophetic language, he says, 'child on the way, it won't be long before you land among us'. Then, prompted by Virgil's offering of '*munuscula*', little gifts of spring plants, Heaney's Poet remembers his own mother sending him, as a small child, to the railway tracks to gather

> . . . the little trefoil, untouchable almost, the shamrock
> And its twining, binding, creepery, tough, thin roots
> All over the place . . .
> Dew-scales shook off the leaves. Tear-ducts asperging.
>
> *Heaney 1999a: ll. 51–4*[14]

Here, Heaney draws on his exilic memory of his first world, the home ground from which he is now separated, to project a tentative hope for peace in the future. 'Tear-ducts asperging' conjoins Virgil's *lacrimae rerum* or, the tears of things, with the ritual beginning of the Catholic Mass, *asperges me, Domine* ('thou shalt sprinkle me, Lord'). So, Heaney is unmistakeably locating the first signs of regeneration – not in political decisions or military intervention – but in the resilience of his originary Catholic community in rural County Derry. Generically speaking, the little plant greening over train tracks also offers a counter-image to pastoral's chronotope of country road filled with refugees, fleeing military conflict at home.

'Glanmore Eclogue'

Heaney's 'Glanmore Eclogue' sees the poet transplanted from North to South, where he has taken up residence in Glanmore Cottage, in County Wicklow. This eclogue's mood is brighter and more relaxed than 'Bann Valley', with a prosy register, variable line length and a mostly iambic beat, in contrast to the Latinate hexameters of 'Bann Valley Eclogue'. 'Glanmore Eclogue' was originally composed for a collection of essays devoted to the Irish playwright John Millington Synge, on whose estate Glanmore Cottage stands. Heaney first rented the cottage in 1972, from the Canadian Ann Saddlemyer, a leading Synge scholar (O'Driscoll 2009: 208).

The pastoral theme of the farmer's vulnerability to forces beyond his control remains central to Heaney's second eclogue. He freely adapts his poem from the model of Virgil's *Eclogues I*, which presents the contrasting fortunes of two herdsmen at the time of Octavian's land redistribution: the unfortunate Meliboeus has been arbitrarily evicted from his farm, while Tityrus has successfully pleaded to have his tenancy turned into a freehold. In his later lecture, 'Eclogues *in extremis*', Heaney says that Meliboeus 'speaks for the victims of the system'. Through the unlucky herdsman's voice, 'the anonymous power of Rome and the brutal might of the regions are shown to have the force of fate' (Heaney 2003b: 2–3). Heaney then quotes David Ferry's translation (Virgil 1999), where Meliboeus mourns, 'we are bound away from our homeland, and the fields we love, away from the home ground' (Heaney 2003b: 3).

In Heaney's poem, the unlucky farmer is named Myles, possibly an allusion to the Irish Modernist Flann O'Brien, who also wrote under the pseudonym Myles na gCopaleen.[15] Myles is finding times hard as wealthier incomers buy up the old smallholdings. He compares the present situation to the days of the Land Commission, founded in 1881, which had helped many tenant farmers gain freeholdings. 'Now,' he says,

> . . . with all this money coming in
> And peace being talked up, the boot's on the other foot.
> First it was Meliboeus's people
> Went to the wall, now it will be us.
> Small farmers here are priced out of the market.

While the Poet is a tenant of Glanmore Cottage, as Heaney still was in the 1970s, by the time of writing Heaney had in fact acquired the cottage from Ann Saddlemyer. This puts him in the position of the lucky herdsman, Tityrus, in *Eclogues I*. Here again, Heaney finds a parallel with Virgil's biography, since the Roman poet is said to have pleaded successfully with Octavian Augustus to have his father's farm restored.

Heaney's writing career had also, by now, taken a dramatically lucky turn: in 1995, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, which would secure recognition for his poetry for the rest of his life and beyond. The challenge for the lucky Mr Honey, as the poem describes him, is to give prominence to the voice of the dispossessed farmer, in a way that Virgil's Tityrus fails to, and to make his literary eclogue responsive to the local man's needs. The point of connection between Poet and farmer is their shared admiration for the playwright Synge, who had an instinctive sympathy for the dispossessed. Myles says his writing was inspired by

> All the tramps he met tramping the roads
> And all he picked up, listening in a loft
> To servant girls colloguing in the kitchen.
>
> *Heaney 2001a: 35*

And the Poet responds that Synge

Was never happier than when he was on the road
With people on their uppers. Loneliness
Was his passport through the world.

Heaney 2001a: 36

This is the chronotopically defining image of pastoral that Heaney will conjure in his lectures on the 'staying power' of the genre, especially in times of personal and political crisis. In this eclogue, the farmer recalls that the country lane is where Synge came to know all the old Wicklow songs. In the last section of the eclogue, Heaney's Poet himself takes up Synge's role as a custodian of local song and legend. Myles asks for an old song, in 'words that the rest of us / Can understand'. And in response, the Poet recalls and sings a well-known Irish song in praise of summer. This song he presents as a gift 'for the glen and you' (Heaney 2001a: 36–7).

The song he performs is a shortened version of the old Irish poem called '*Cétemain*', which Heaney had earlier translated in full. The complete translation appeared in the journal *Éire-Ireland*, a year before the publication of *Electric Light*.[16] He also published another, shortened version in Marie Heaney's beautiful picture book, *Names Upon the Harp*, where the poem appears in the context of his wife's retelling of the legendary Cycle of Finn.[17] What is striking about its appearance at the end of 'Glanmore Eclogue' is the way the Irish material is woven seamlessly into the frame of Virgilian pastoral. In this, the most compressed of Heaney's various translations of '*Cétemain*', the original fourteen-stanza Irish poem has been distilled into four compact, tetrameter quatrains. Virgil's Mantuan landscape is here transformed into an emphatically Irish one:

Heather breathes on soft bog-pillows.
Bog-cotton bows to moorland wind . . .
Bogbanks shine like ravens' wings.

Heaney 2001a: 37

In 'Glanmore Eclogue', as in all his published translations, Heaney's '*Cétemain*' ends with the line, 'Summer, shimmer, perfect days'. The absence of a verb conveys the warm stillness of high summer, and here, the suggestion of a *pacatum orbem*, a world brought to peace at last. To invoke Schiller's terms, this 'naïve', medieval Irish poem is offered within the frame of a 'sentimental' modern eclogue, that knowingly acknowledges the threat facing local farmers in the twenty-first century. Thus, 'Glanmore Eclogue' remains 'completely alert' as Heaney puts it in 'Eclogues *in extremis*', 'to the ill fit between the beautifully tinted literary map and the uglier shape that reality has taken in the world' (Heaney 2003b: 6).

By closing the eclogue with this celebrated Irish summer song, Heaney allows it to shimmer on in the imagination of the listener. Drawing on the imagery of his lecture, *Eclogues in extremis*, we might see this summer song functioning as a kind of 'Crystal Palace', refracting and magnifying the ordinary light of day and thus fortifying the local community against present hardship. What is particularly striking about 'Glanmore Eclogue' is that the

Virgilian pastoral dialogue presents the 'uglier shape of reality', while the Irish song preserves the image of a perfect, golden age, the reverse of what one might expect in a knowing, post-pastoral poem drawing on a classical model. So, for Heaney, it seems that Virgil's *Eclogues* are fortifying because they are already 'post-pastoral', already hardened with country realism. And that hardened, classical carapace allows the modern Irish poet to preserve and protect a core image of Irish 'first world' innocence and greenness.

'Eclogues IX'

In an interview with Rui Homem, Heaney mentions casually that after writing 'Glanmore Eclogue' he went on to produce a translation of *Eclogues IX* 'to give a bit more context'. He also admits to 'a little secret, personal link' with Lycidas, the younger and less experienced of the two singers, who begins by saying he is *incertus*, 'not sure', since he has not yet done anything of note (Heaney 2001c: 25–6). Heaney published his earliest poems under the pseudonym *incertus*, borrowing this from Lycidas. Some years later, he referred to his translation of *Eclogues IX* in much more serious terms, as 'a poet's *apologia pro vita mea*' composed 'in the aftermath' of the Good Friday Agreement (Heaney 2012: 22). Lycidas and Moeris, the two herdsmen in *Eclogues IX*, have survived the civil war but are now living at the mercy of new landowners. The older shepherd, Moeris, has lost ownership of his goats and is going to town to sell them on behalf of the new owner. As they make their way to town the two shepherds try to remember their pastoral songs, but as a sign of the darkening times they can only recollect fragments of what they knew.

As in 'Bann Valley', Heaney deploys a mixed prosody that consciously hybridizes traditional English iambic pentameter with the falling rhythms and longer line of Virgil's dactylic hexameter. In Heaney's translation, the herdsmen speak in local dialect, with distinct Hibernian phrasing. For example, the younger man warns of his goats, 'watch / The boyo with the horns doesn't go for you' (Heaney 2001a: 32). And the older herdsman, Moeris, has an even more pronounced Hibernian turn of phrase. He complains of having to sell his own goats for his new landlord. Literally translated, he says, 'we send off these kid-goats (may it not turn out well!)' – '*hos illi (quod nec uertat bene) mittimus haedos*' (Virgil, *Eclogues IX* l.6). Heaney renders the line as, 'And these kid-goats in the creel – / Bad cess to him – these kids are his. All's changed' (Heaney 2001a: 31). A 'creel' is a kind of basket commonly used in parts of Scotland and Ireland. And 'All's changed' more specifically recalls W. B. Yeats' famous refrain in his poem about the Irish Rebellion, 'Easter, 1916' ('All changed, changed utterly'). 'Bad cess', an Irish expression for 'bad luck', also underlines the political context of a changed world, both in Virgil's *Eclogue* and in Heaney's memory of Northern Irish sectarian conflict. A 'cess' is a term for a military tax or levy that is still in current usage in Ireland (*OED* 1, 2). Virgil's Mantuan shepherds are blighted, or 'cessed', by military men laying claim to their lands, and in the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement, Heaney seems to be associating their history with the Ulster communities ravaged by decades of sectarian violence, after centuries of military colonization (*OED* provides examples of 'cess' being exacted in Ireland from the sixteenth

to the nineteenth centuries; cf. the electronic *Dictionary of the Irish Language s.v.* '*cís*', probably from the Latin '*census*'). Heaney's Moeris also transforms a Roman expression for bad luck, 'the wolves have seen [him /Moeris] first', '*lupi Moerim uidere priores*' (Virgil, *Eclogues IX* l.54), into a northern expression. He says 'maybe the wolves have blinked it [his voice]', where 'blinked' is a Scots-Irish term for 'jinxed' or 'bewitched' (Heaney 2001a: 34). So in Heaney's translation, there is no doubting that these herdsmen come from the Irish countryside.

In the course of their journey, the two herdsmen exchange two fragments of song each. In Virgil's original eclogue, one of each of their song-fragments is literary and Theocritean, and one each is drawn from their own local, Roman context (see Segal 1965: 247; Clausen 1994: 280). Heaney's translation continues this weave of intertextuality, by giving each herdsman a foreign-sounding Roman song, while more freely adapting the second to a Northern Irish context. His Moeris takes license with the Latin, for example, in this song-fragment to his beloved, Galatea:

> *'huc ades, O Galatea; quis est nam ludus in undis?*
> *hic uer purpureum, uarios hic flumina circum*
> *fundit humus flores, hic candida populus antro*
> *imminet et lentae texunt umbracula uites.*
> *huc ades; insani feriant sine litora fluctus.'*
>
> *Virgil,* Eclogues IX *ll. 39–43*

In his literal, prose translation, Fairclough renders the above passage thus:

> 'Come to me, Galatea! What sport can there be in waves? Here is rosy spring; here, by the streams, Earth scatters her varied flowers; here the white poplar bends over the cave, and the clinging vines weave shade bowers. Come to me; leave the wild waves to lash the shore.'
>
> *Fairclough 1978: 69*

In Heaney's version, this becomes:

> 'What's in the sea and the waves that keeps you spellbound?
> Here earth breaks out in wildflowers, she rills and rolls
> The streams in waterweed, here poplars bend
> Where the bank is undermined and vines in thickets
> Are meshing shade with light. Come here to me.
> Let the mad white horses paw and pound the shore.'
>
> *Heaney 2001a: 33*

Heaney transforms the Latin alliterations, *flumina, fundit, flores, fluctus*, into Anglo-Saxon pairs of rhyming verbs, 'rills and rolls', and 'paw and pound'. The '*insani fluctus*'

(mad waves) are also given an Irish, postcolonial resonance. Arguably, he is alluding to Kipling's poem, 'White Horses', where the equine, white-capped waves are a metaphor for the British Navy. So, Heaney's Moeris is pleading with his beloved to put aside her admiration for British imperial power and return to her native ground.

The two herdsmen's exchange of song comes to an end as night falls on the road. Lycidas, the more optimistic of the two, proposes to continue singing as the evening breezes fall. Virgil's '*ceciderunt aurae*' (l. 58) has been variously interpreted, but in the Loeb edition, Fairclough (1978: 71) opts for a melancholy sense of finality: 'every breath of the murmuring breeze is dead.' By contrast, Heaney's Lycidas feels the onset of evening as something more benign. He says, 'now this hush has fallen / Everywhere – look – on the plain, and every breeze / Has calmed and quietened' (Heaney 2001a: 34). He argues that twilight is the time for more song: '*hic, Moeri, canamus*', 'here, Moeris, let us sing' (Virgil, *Eclogues IX* l.61). For Moeris, however, it is time for pressing on. He brusquely silences the younger poet, saying:

> *Desine plura, puer, et quod nunc instat agamus;*
> *carmina tum melius, cum uenerit ipse, canemus.*
>
> *Virgil,* Eclogues IX *ll. 66–7*

> That's enough of that, young fellow. We've a job to do.
> When the real singer comes, we'll sing in earnest.
>
> *Heaney 2001a: 34*

For many translators, these lines seem fatalistic, especially since the herdsmen are approaching the shadow of a tomb along the road. But in Heaney's translation, 'we have a job to do' might equally refer to the greater task of building the peace.

In both the Latin, and Heaney's translation, Moeris is also furthering the younger man's '*canamus*', let us sing (l. 61), in his response which reiterates '*carmina*' ('songs') and '*canemus*' ('we will sing'). Pastoral is not being silenced but deflected to a later context. Extratextually, this invitation is taken up by Horace when he repeats Moeris' '*canemus*', we will sing, placing it as the last word in his last ode (*Odes* IV.15). *Canemus* only appears twice in Latin poetry, as the last word in these two poems by Virgil and Horace. So, the word conveys a sense of ongoing, unbroken fellowship, which is renewed in Heaney's translation, for the sake of the herdsmen on their darkening country road.

Lectures on pastoral

These three Virgilian eclogues were republished in *Electric Light* in 2001. And it was in this year, following the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, that Heaney began lecturing and writing on the genre of pastoral, theorizing what he saw as its special 'staying power' in writers he admired, from Virgil to modern poets such as Wilfred Owen, Czeslaw Miłosz and Miklós Radnóti. One of the earliest lectures he gave after

9/11 was delivered to the Royal College of Surgeons, on 5 November 2001, in Dublin (Heaney 2002a). Given that he was addressing medical professionals, it is unsurprising that his talk centred on the notion of haleness, of health and wholeness. His lecture, entitled 'The Whole Thing: on the Good of Poetry', is not specifically about pastoral. But all the qualities of pastoral he admires, its 'integrity, consonance and radiance' are brought to the fore, in a context where ordinary reality had suddenly been delivered a hammer blow. After 9/11, he said, 'there was a feeling that a crack had run through the foundations of the world, that the roof was blown off, that the border between the imaginable and the possible had been eradicated' (Heaney 2002: 11). At such bewildering moments, he argued, quoting Robert Frost, 'people need an articulation that will act as a momentary stay against confusion'. But they also 'need to be brought *beyond* confusion' (Heaney 2002: 11) by poetry that re-establishes some congruity, some alignment, between our inner and outer worlds. The example he gives of a poem that does this is Wilfred Owen's 'Strange Meeting', in which the poet dreams he meets the soul of an enemy soldier he has just killed in the trenches the previous day. In the dream, the dead soldier forgives the living one, so that, as Heaney writes, 'in the hell on earth that the 20C poet inhabits and interprets, sympathy is given, blame is removed and enmity is replaced by friendship' (Heaney 2002a: 14). Heaney's reading ushers Owen's underworldly poem into the material world of Virgilian pastoral where two countrymen meet on the open road, compare their contrasting fortunes and affirm their kinship through poetry.

The fortifying and clarifying power that Heaney attributes to pastoral is thus inextricably linked to memory. In the example above, the living soldier recalls the previous day's infernal experience, and then is reminded by the dead soldier of their deeper, earlier, unbreakable shared humanity. The personal and collective memories of the protagonists are fortified (in Heaney's reading) by the familiar contours of the ancient, memorious genre itself. In another lecture, entitled 'Towers, Trees, Terrors: A Rêverie in Urbino', delivered later in the same month (23 November 2001; published as Heaney 2007a), Heaney draws on personal and national memories to forge a bond of kinship between the Irish and Roman/Italian poetic traditions. Heaney uses the occasion of his visit to Urbino, where he was receiving an honorary degree, to gather a host of poets whose remembered presences could help his audience begin to filter, comprehend and counterbalance the scenes of catastrophic destruction in New York they had all seen on TV screens two months earlier. First, Heaney establishes connections between the poetry and landscape of Urbino and Ireland, recalling how Yeats was inspired by the sight of a tower in Urbino to purchase his Thoor Ballylee in Galway. This tower of poetry leads Heaney to Dante, and the tower in *inferno* where Ugolino was imprisoned. Heaney's earlier translation of this canto (Heaney 1979: 60–3) reminds him of the hunger strikers in the Maze Prison, near Belfast. And then from Ugolino's tower, he moves on to the Twin Towers in New York, and the Horatian ode he translated in response to these new 'terrors'. Thus Yeats, Dante and Horace offer images of towers made durable through their transformation into artistic form.

Finally, however, Heaney's trail of memories returns him to Virgilian pastoral, and to a familiar language and landscape from which he evidently derives much relief. He says:

> . . . to be honest, I am more at home among trees than among towers . . . More fitted by temperament for conversation with cattle drovers on a country road than for passionate argument with the damned in the deep circles of hell . . . When Virgil appears to me, it is not as someone who is heaven-sent by a Beatrice but rather as somebody encountered by chance on the road to the village.
>
> *Heaney 2007a: 152*

This is again to conjure the pastoral chronotope of a roadside encounter. Interlaced with Heaney's appreciation for the literary form, with which he has himself engaged as translator and original poet, are more personal memories of his rural upbringing in Bellaghy and County Derry. Thus, in invoking Virgil's presence, what Heaney emphasizes is the Roman poet's attachment to his own local, rural home ground, which is the ground for all his poetry:

> I bring up Virgil simply because I love to think of him, the genius of his language who is also so local in his origins, . . . a poet with a gift for pastoral song who nevertheless had the imaginative power to make pastoral song accomodate [sic] the brutalities and injustices of his time; a temperament made for Arcadia but forced to take stock of Actium.
>
> *Heaney 2007a: 153*

In one sense, this portrait presents a naturally irenic, pastoral temperament being stretched and distorted out of shape by the violence of his times. But in another sense, Heaney suggests that Virgil's early pastoral poems provide the protective shield of remembered origin which help him as an artist to filter, comprehend, order and ultimately withstand the chaos and brutality of Roman civil war.

A year later, in his address to the Royal Irish Academy (6 June 2002; published as Heaney 2003a), Heaney delivers his most formal *apologia* for the genre of pastoral. The lecture is entitled 'Eclogues *in extremis* – the staying power of pastoral', where 'staying' has two senses: 'resisting or standing up to power' and 'tholing it', or enduring and keeping going. In this essay, he offers the image of Virgil's Book of Eclogues as

> . . . a kind of Crystal Palace, beautifully structured and strong because of inner relationships and symmetries . . . fully aware that artificial conditions were being created but . . . in each case the art asks us to see through it, to view it from all sides, to enter in and stand back, to regard it as both revelation and intervention . . .
>
> *Heaney 2003b: 6–7*

The Palace can be admired as a pleasing aesthetic object, just as Virgil's Book of Eclogues can be enjoyed as a 'literary-historical hall of mirrors in which traditional motif and classical allusion repeat and reflect one another for their own sweet sake' (Heaney 2003b: 5). But what truly deserves our admiration is the inner strength of the engineering. In the

case of Virgil's *Eclogues*, the 'engineering' is the formal, dialogic structure of the pastoral mode, which crystalizes or distils the actual, lived experience of persons displaced by powerful agents but surviving, resisting or keeping going against all odds.

Thus, in this lecture, Heaney comes to associate Virgil's itinerant shepherds explicitly with modern migrants who have been displaced by twentieth-century military conflict. He goes on to discuss three modern poets, one Irish (Louis MacNeice), one Polish (Czesław Miłosz) and one Hungarian (Miklós Radnóti), who all composed pastoral poems as a way of filtering, shaping and withstanding their experience of warfare. Chief amongst Heaney's admired literary exemplars is Czesław Miłosz, whom he regards as a twentieth-century Virgil (cf. Heaney 2003a: 411):

> . . . the integrity, consonance and radiance that I've claimed for Virgil's *Eclogues* can also be claimed for Miłosz's 'The World'. The Polish poet's beautifully serene poem resembles *The Eclogues* in that it celebrates the rural idyll of a family farm, which for Miłosz was a small woodland estate in Lithuania.
>
> *Heaney 2003b: 7*

Miłosz wrote 'The World' in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, in 1943, where he conjures the *locus amoenus* of his remembered home ground as a defence against 'one of the most atrocious moments of World War II' (Heaney 2003b: 7). For Heaney, what is important is 'not so much the consoling innocence of the memories themselves as the artistic intransigence with which the innocence is presented'. As Heaney says, 'there is something bullet-proof about Miłosz's crystal palace' (Heaney 2003b: 7). The idyllic rural scenes in 'The World' flaunt their independence from the actual world of occupied Warsaw. As Heaney remarks elsewhere, Miłosz and other Eastern European poets deploy classical pastoral strategically, 'to devastating effect', in defiance of their military oppressors (Heaney 2001c: 26). Miłosz survived the occupation, escaped to France, eventually emigrated to the United States to become a professor at the University of Berkeley, California, and in 1980 was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. So, in a very material sense, he was vivified and sustained by his writings in pastoral and other poetic genres.

A bleaker case is offered by the Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti, whose classical eclogues were composed in a labour camp and on a forced march which eventually drove him to exhaustion and death. A notebook containing his eclogues was rescued from the poet's body, exhumed from a mass grave after the war and later published and translated as *Camp Notebook* (2000). Radnóti's 'Eighth Eclogue' gives classical form to the poet's experience of that final, forced march. Here, as Heaney observes,

> . . . the situation envisaged in Virgil's first [eclogue], where the outcast on the road meets a more secure singer, is drastically revised [in Radnóti's 'Eighth Eclogue']. The crystal dome has been smashed, the landscape is the actual landscape of war, and the poet – the one in the poem and the one writing the poem – is being herded towards . . . death . . . but even in these extreme conditions the genre comes to his aid.
>
> *Heaney 2003b: 12*

Turning to poetry did not, alas, save Radnóti from meeting his death on this alien country road. So, in what sense does the genre of pastoral come to his aid? Within the poem itself, the speaker is galvanized by a chance encounter with a stranger on the road, 'not a Tityrus under a broad beech but the biblical prophet Nahum', who assures the speaker, '"A prophet's rage is kin to a poet's: / meat for the people, and drink!"' (Heaney 2003b: 12). Heaney implies that this second, powerful speaker makes his appearance in the poem, in part because of the generic horizon of expectation of pastoral, in which an unfortunate shepherd's song calls forth a counterbalancing response from a more fortunate singer. That is, by drawing on pastoral's expectation of a dialogue of voices, Radnóti was able to conjure the prophet's reply to his own, urgent needs. The 'prophet's rage' in Radnóti's eclogue reminds Heaney of Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 65', which demands to know, 'How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea / Whose action is no stronger than a flower?'. Heaney (2004: 13) had quoted those lines to explain why he chose to translate Horace in the aftermath of 9/11. The familiar sonnet, or in this case, the pastoral eclogue, gives a durable shape to the traumatic experience of catastrophe. It does not necessarily explain or diminish the trauma, but it helps commit the experience to shared public memory. The exhumation and preservation of Radnóti's *Camp Notebook* is yet another, material proof of pastoral's ability to fortify and nourish its living audience, in defiance of the deathly powers that overwhelmed its writer. By remembering and passing on the experience of the dispossessed and powerless, pastoral strengthens our shared sense of common, vulnerable humanity.

Heaney, pastoral and displacement: conclusions

Heaney's prose essays and lectures on pastoral focus more and more intently on the condition of ordinary people displaced and made homeless by twentieth- and twenty-first-century acts of terrorism and military conflict. But there is also something resolutely optimistic in his reading of modern pastoral written about or in resistance to the experience of war. As his own experiments in Virgilian pastoral so movingly demonstrate, it always remained possible for him to conjure the vivifying images of a primary, green world. Like the trefoil surfacing from his memories of childhood at the end of 'Bann Valley Eclogue', Heaney's pastoral eclogues remind us that fundamental change comes from the ground up, and the potential for regeneration lies everywhere around us.

Notes

1. For his millennial reflections on pastoral, see Heaney 2001b, 2001c, 2001d, 2002b, 2003b, 2007a and 2007b.
2. This chapter builds on previous analysis of Heaney's Virgilian pastoral in Falconer 2022: 91–123. My reading of 'Glanmore Eclogue', in particular, has been substantially revised/extended from Falconer 2022: 115–16, thanks to feedback at the 'Irish Migrations and

Classical Antiquity' conference in Aarhus (November 2022). With warm thanks to Isabelle Torrance for her kind invitation, and to Maxim Fomin for sharing his expertise in medieval Irish poetry.

3. Extract from 'The Wanderer', from *Opened Ground* by Seamus Heaney. Copyright © Estate of Seamus Heaney. Reproduced by permission of Faber and Faber Ltd. All rights reserved.
4. Heaney studied the Anglo-Saxon poem 'The Wanderer' at Queen's University, Belfast, 1958–61 (Heaney 1999b: 4); the text of the poem can be viewed at https://archive.org/details/exeterbookanthol01goll/page/286/mode/2up.
5. On this poem, see Corcoran 1998: 60–1, 79, 80–2; Higgins 2021: 3, 33, 43, *et passim*; Lavan 2020: 37, 83; O'Driscoll 2009: 160–1, 180–1, 190; Russell 2014: 206, 296.
6. See Falconer 2023 on Heaney's image of Goya, who 'flourished / The stained cape of his heart as history charged' (Heaney 1975: 65). On poetry's 'redress', see Heaney 1995: 1–16.
7. Extract from 'Bann Valley Eclogue', by Seamus Heaney, published in the *Times Literary Supplement* (8 October 1999). Copyright © Estate of Seamus Heaney. Reproduced by permission of Faber and Faber Ltd. All rights reserved.
8. A 'tow', from Middle English *towe*, is 'a fibre of flax, hemp, or jute prepared for spinning' (*OED*, n.1), while 'wheal', from Old English *hwele*, means 'a ridge' (*OED*, n.2).
9. The word 'loaning' is a dialect term for 'country lane' (O'Driscoll 2009: xx).
10. A shorter, revised version is published in Heaney 2001a: 11–12. Heaney also read the poem aloud on BBC Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* in September 1999. For the typescript of this broadcast, see I *Seamus Heaney Literary Papers* I.xv.10.
11. Extract from 'Bann Valley Eclogue', by Seamus Heaney, published in the *Times Literary Supplement* (8 October 1999). Copyright © Estate of Seamus Heaney. Reproduced by permission of Faber and Faber Ltd. All rights reserved.
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14. Extract from 'Bann Valley Eclogue', by Seamus Heaney, published in the *Times Literary Supplement* (8 October 1999). Copyright © Estate of Seamus Heaney. Reproduced by permission of Faber and Faber Ltd. All rights reserved.
15. 'Myles' might also evoke either 'miles' ('soldier') or the Milesians, i.e. the sons of Míl, mythological founder of Gaelic Irish race, as Twiddy (2012: 132) suggests.
16. The anonymous Irish text is published with a facing English translation, entitled 'May-Day', in Murphy 1962: 156–9. In *Éire-Ireland* 2000: 88–9, Heaney's translation, entitled 'Summer Song' (Heaney 2000b), appears next to the Irish text as given in Murphy's edition. For further editions of 'May-Day', see https://codecs.vanhamel.nl/C%C3%A9tamon>.
17. Heaney's translation is published in four versions, of which I am aware: *Éire-Ireland* 2000; in M. Heaney 2000: 71; inset into 'Glanmore Eclogue' in Heaney 2000c (in the volume *Interpreting Synge*); Heaney 2001a: 35–7 (*Electric Light*). The *Éire-Ireland* translation omits stanzas 11–12 of the Irish, with the woman from stanza 12 transposed into the 'maiden' of Heaney's compressed stanza 10. The version in Marie Heaney's book omits the translation of stanzas 4–7 and 10–13 altogether, resulting in a six-stanza song (corresponding to stanzas 1–3, 8–9 and 14 of the Irish). The version of 'Glanmore Eclogue' in the *Synge* volume

compresses stanzas 1–3 into a single, opening stanza, restores stanza 4 (becoming the second stanza), and omits stanzas 5–7 and 10–13, resulting in a five-stanza song (corresponding loosely to fragments of stanzas 1–3, 4, 8–9 and14 of the Irish). Finally, the *Electric Light* version of 'Glanmore Eclogue' corresponds, with minor variations, to the version in M. Heaney, but further omits stanza 8, resulting in a 4 x 4 ode to an Irish summer.

CHAPTER 18
IMMIGRATION, CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY AND DIVERSITY: *ENVOI*

Isabelle Torrance

Migration data for Ireland shows a significant shift in migration patterns from the 1990s onwards, where emigration rates fall and the country becomes a new immigrant destination driven by the economic development of the 'Celtic Tiger' years. Ireland remains a country with comparatively high emigration rates, but emigration has fallen dramatically since the last mid-twentieth-century peak, while the growing immigrant and second-generation population has created a more ethnically diverse community of Irish citizens who have experience of or have been impacted by migration (see Gilmartin and Murphy 2024 for data). 'Ireland has gone from an emigrant society to an immigrant-emigrant society', the title of an opinion piece by Fintan O'Toole in the *Irish Times*, 6 August 2024, sums up this phenomenon concisely.

As we have seen throughout this volume, migration and exclusion often go hand in hand. The ultimate classical paradigm of a migrant, Odysseus, a king, a war hero, a victor, is reduced to indigent status and suffers abuse of various kinds. In an Irish context, former President Mary Robinson reminds us in *The Women's Podcast* (22 August 2024), 'It's really important that we see the migrant for who he or she is. They are the brave people of their community.'[1] Discrimination experienced by Irish citizens of immigrant descent, particularly non-white Irish individuals and communities, is a topic that has (belatedly, it must be stressed) come to the fore in recent years. The extraordinary global success, for instance, of Irish-Nigerian author, academic and broadcaster, Emma Dabiri, following her debut book *Don't Touch My Hair*, published in 2019, brought an international spotlight both to personal experiences of racism growing up in Ireland and to broader negative attitudes towards African hair.

If, as has been suggested in this book, classical antiquity is part of the fibre of Irish cultural and migration history, this has, until very recently, been an essentially white history. But there are glimpses of change. For the 2004 premiere of Seamus Heaney's adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone*, *The Burial at Thebes*, written to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Abbey Theatre as Ireland's national theatre, Ruth Negga was cast for the lead role of Antigone. The Irish-Ethiopian actor, now an Academy Award and Tony Award nominee, was an inspired choice for a production, directed by Canadian Lorraine Pintal, that clearly aimed to communicate, alongside its distinctively Irish voice, the international immediacy behind the play's message, post 9/11 and following the instigation of the Iraq War (cf. Torrance 2020: 330–2). The idea that the two perspectives, Irish and international, might productively co-exist through Negga, however, was unfortunately not immediately grasped in all quarters. In one assessment,

'the director's choice of Ruth Negga as Antigone seemed striking. Rather than a pale-faced Irish lass, Negga looked more Mediterranean and sounded more English than most of the cast' (Wilmer 2007: 239). This statement entirely negates Negga's Irishness based on her skin-colour and perceived accent, in spite of Negga's own well-known identification as a proud Irish-Ethiopian. She is 'more English', and by implication 'less Irish', although Negga does have a natural and distinctly Irish accent which, as an actor, she can play up or down. I can further report that, in a personal conversation with Seamus Heaney in 2005 at the house of the Provost in Trinity College Dublin, Heaney made plain that he had not been a fan of the 2004 Abbey Theatre production of *The Burial at Thebes* and had by far preferred the recent production at the Nottingham Playhouse directed by Lucy Pitman-Wallace (I was living in Nottingham at the time). The event at the Provost's house was a celebration of Marianne McDonald, the pioneering Irish-American philanthropist and academic, whose great passion is Greek tragedy, and to whom Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* is dedicated. Pitman-Wallace (2019: 70) recalls, separately, that Heaney gave her 'the impression he had not been wholly satisfied by the [Abbey Theatre] production', which received mixed reviews. What it was that Heaney was dissatisfied with was not made clear, but the Pitman-Wallace production, which met with Heaney's resounding approval (Pitman-Wallace 2019: 74), was, as one reviewer put it, 'a mirror image of a Greek theatre' (as it is traditionally imagined), with grey cloaks for costumes and so forth; the reviewer, in fact, seems to forget that the text is Heaney's when he praises how Pitman-Wallace's production 'lets Sophocles' lines speak for themselves' (Dunnett 2005).

Reading between the lines, then, it seems that Heaney favoured the more purist approach of Pitman-Wallace in creating a conservative representation of Greek tragedy. But if the intersection of Irish migrations and classical antiquity signals participation and resistance, as I suggested in Chapter 1, the Abbey Theatre production starring Ruth Negga emerges as a significant articulation of both these facets. Unlike Dabiri, Negga, who spent her formative years in Limerick and Dublin, claims never to have experienced explicit racism in Ireland, although she felt different; she attributes her sense of identity to her various experiences of migration, from her Irish mother's immigrant status in Ethiopia (which they left after the outbreak of violence to return to Ireland), to Negga's own immigrant experiences in the UK (see, e.g., interviews with Clarke 2021 and Lasry 2024). In bringing that insider/outsider sensibility to the role of Heaney's Antigone, Negga could emblematize both the conflict within Antigone (an insider of the royal house but an outsider as an ostensibly powerless young woman) and the tensions of Heaney's dual Irish and global message.

Sophocles' *Antigone* has arguably become, as Fiona Macintosh suggested, '*the* exemplary Irish tragedy', given the extraordinary number of Irish versions and productions of this play (Macintosh 2011: 90; cf. Torrance 2020a). It is uplifting, therefore, to see increasing diversity, albeit slow, in new adaptations. Carlo Gébler's 2021 novel, *I, Antigone*, traces Theban ancestry to its distant mythological origins in the rape of Europa (sister of Cadmus, founder of Thebes) and, with the opening words of 'Book One', demolishes the stereotype of European whiteness by presenting 'Europa, brown-skinned and brown-eyed'

(Gébler 2021: 3). Casting Sade Malone in the 2024 film *Twig* is a further case in point. Of Irish-Barbadian heritage, and trained in England, Malone had been starring in the lead role of the January–March 2024 production of John B. Keane's classic Irish drama *Sive*, before appearing, simultaneously, in the title role of Marian Quinn's *Twig*, a film adaptation of *Antigone* transposed to contemporary gangland Dublin, which premiered at the Dublin International Film Festival in February 2024 and was released to Irish cinemas in June of that year. Proud of her hybridity, Malone asserts that what it means to be Black and Irish was key to the filming of *Twig*, with its largely Black cast (Clarke 2024).

Another breakout Irish star of 2024 is Ferdia Lennon.[2] Self-described as born in Dublin to an Irish mother and a Libyan father, Lennon emigrated to Paris as an adult, living there for many years before settling in Norwich (https://www.ferdialennon.com/about). Educated in Dublin, with a BA in History and Classics from University College Dublin, Lennon's 2024 debut novel, *Glorious Exploits*, is a new twist on the catastrophic failed attempt by Athens to invade Sicily in 415–413 BCE, and the ensuing imprisonment of thousands of Athenian POWs in the limestone quarries outside Syracuse, as recorded by the Greek historian Thucydides. Taking further inspiration from the anecdote in Plutarch, according to which some POWs were able to secure their freedom by performing sections from the plays of Euripides for the Sicilian fans of his dramas, Lennon's novel revolves around a theatrical production of Euripides' *Medea* and *Trojan Women* in one of the quarries. Set in Syracuse in 412 BCE, one of the novel's persistent considerations is the displacement of people.

Two unemployed working-class Sicilian best friends, Lampo (the narrator) and Gelon (a Euripides superfan) visit the destitute remaining Athenian POWs, who languish starving in the blistering heat of the stone quarries, exchanging scraps of food with them in return for recitation of lines from Euripides. *Medea*, the tale of a foreign immigrant to Greece, who helps her Greek husband achieve a secure status and is then abandoned by him, is Gelon's favourite play and generates the best nutritional rewards for the prisoners. But, when he hears about *Trojan Women*, a new play never yet performed in Sicily, he becomes obsessed with the idea of staging both plays in the quarry with the Athenian prisoners as the cast. *Trojan Women* is a relentless tragedy focused on the fate of the female Trojan POWs after the Trojan War, and their assignment to Greek masters in various Greek cities, and this forms the climax of the theatrical performance directed by Gelon and Lampo. Other enslaved characters in Lennon's novel are casualties of earlier wars, from the skilled Libyan mask-makers and the Argive bouncer at the local tavern, to the Lydian serving girl Lyra. A further thematic thread in the novel is the disconnect in society between status (perceived or actual) and substance, a point well made by the way Lampo, who is normally dressed in dirty rags and has a limp, is treated differently after buying expensive new clothes. The wealthy local 'aristos' are uninteresting characters, who seem to seek some kind of substance by descending on the grotty local tavern. Meanwhile, the slave girl Lyra is highly educated and the novel's working-class heroes Lampo and Gelon pull off several extraordinary exploits.

A striking feature of Lennon's novel is the Dublin dialect employed in its composition. The novel set in antiquity thus has a resoundingly contemporary Irish voice. Lennon

creates a further link between Ireland and the ancient Greek world by introducing a key character named after an Irish mythological prince – Tuireann. Known primarily through the tale of the sons of Tuireann, Lennon discusses the significance of this myth for his novel in an interview with Lindsay Hunter. After committing a brutal murder, the sons of Tuireann are forced on a migratory journey of penance, which includes Sicily, Persia and Greece, and as the tale progresses our sympathy and empathy for the characters is torn in different directions.[3] That theme of empathizing with the enemy is central to *Glorious Exploits*, but the character of Tuireann in Lennon's novel is mysterious. He has clearly had a checkered and difficult past, in spite of his excessive wealth. Temporarily in Syracuse on his ship, he collects gruesome artefacts of war and other human suffering, but he is a generous patron of the arts and sponsors the production of Euripides at the Syracusan quarry. When he leaves Sicily, moreover, there are a variety of Greeks on board who sail off with him. Lennon, himself named after the Irish mythological hero and warrior Ferdia, best friend of Cú Chulainn, thus connects Irish mythological migrations with classical Greece. In doing so, moreover, he emulates the connections drawn between Ireland and Greece in medieval tales of Irish migratory origins, such as those contained in the foundational *Lebor Gabála Érenn* ('The Book of Invasions of Ireland'), discussed especially in Chapters 3 and 4 of this volume, in which the tale of the sons of Tuireann is preserved.

Turning to Greek tragedy to address the sufferings of people displaced by war is not, in itself, new for an Irish author. Marina Carr's play *Trojan Women*, which premiered in 2015, and Colm Tóibín's 2017 novel, *House of Names*, a retelling of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and related tragedies, both focus our attention on the plight of women, prisoners and refugees in times of war against the backdrop of the Syrian War and the ensuing refugee crisis (Torrance 2020b: 263-6; Torrance 2021: 157). Applying an Irish vernacular to a classical setting, however, is a novel move that goes beyond Marina Carr's transposition of the *Medea* story to the Irish midlands in *By the Bog of Cats . . .* This very well-known play, written in Irish midlands dialect but set in modern Ireland (rather than in antiquity), appears on the Irish Leaving Certificate syllabus. In Lennon's novel, on the other hand, alongside the all-pervasive Dublin dialect appearing in ancient Sicily, experiences of migration are key. Often, but not always, caused by war, the impact of migration is a persistent concern throughout, and the book concludes with a consideration of Euripides' own migration north to Macedonia towards the end of his career.

Returning once more to the opening suggestion made in Chapter 1 of this volume, that the intersections of Irish migrations with classical antiquity traced throughout this book can be framed as articulations of participation and resistance, we find arguably the ultimate expression of this in Ferdia Lennon's *Glorious Exploits*. His characters, one and all, express the desire, no matter how dire their circumstances, to participate in life and resist death, and this theme is flagged by an epigraph to the novel from Euripides' *Trojan Women*, which is quoted as

> Death cannot be what Life is, Child; the cup
> of death is empty, and Life has always hope.

Notes

1. https://www.irishtimes.com/podcasts/the-womens-podcast/mary-robinson-its-really-important-that-we-see-the-migrant-for-who-he-or-she-is-they-are-the-brave-people-of-their-community/.
2. I am grateful to Jonathan Barnes for first drawing my attention to Lennon's work.
3. https://lithub.com/ferdia-lennon-on-the-usefulness-of-being-lost/, 4 June 2024; from 42:35.

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